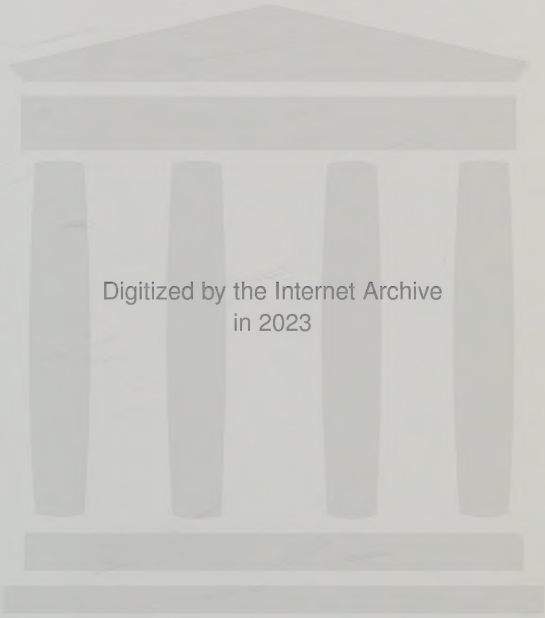

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To John Lauber
Dec 25th/8

from Em

Phebe C Lauber
Hawthorne
Nice.

Oct. 16th/88.

MAGNA CHARTA
MILTON
DEATH WARR
of CHARLES
A RNOLD

BY THE AUTHOR OF

NEW EDITION.

TIONS BY SYDNEY P. HALL.

to the death warrant,

TOM BROWN AT OXFORD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"TOM BROWN'S SCHOOL DAYS."

E 70

NEW EDITION.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY SYDNEY P. HALL.

CHICAGO:
BELFORD, CLARKE & CO.,
1883.

Printed and Bound by Donohue & Henneberry, Chicago.

TO

THE REV. F. D. MAURICE,

IN MEMORY OF FOURTEEN YEARS' FELLOW WORK,

AND IN TESTIMONY OF

EVER INCREASING AFFECTION AND GRATITUDE

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

PREFACES written to explain the objects or meaning of a book, or to make any appeal, *ad misericordiam* or other, in its favor, are, in my opinion, nuisances. Any book worth reading will explain its own objects and meaning, and the more it is criticised and turned inside out, the better for it and its author. Of all books, too, it seems to me that novels require prefaces least—at any rate, on their first appearance. Notwithstanding which belief, I must ask readers for three minutes' patience before they make trial of this book.

The natural pleasure which I felt at the unlooked for popularity of the first part of the present story, was much lessened by the pertinacity with which many persons, acquaintance as well as strangers, would insist (both in public and private) on identifying the hero and the author. On the appearance of the first few numbers of the present continuation in *Macmillan's Magazine*, the same thing occurred, and, in fact, reached such a pitch, as to lead me to make some changes in the story. Sensitiveness on such a point may seem folly, but if readers had felt the sort of loathing and disgust which one feels at the notion of painting a favorable likeness of oneself in a work of fiction, they would not wonder at it. So, now that this book is finished and Tom Brown, so far as I am concerned, is done with for ever, I must take this, my first and last chance of saying, that he is not I, either as boy or man—in fact, not to beat about the bush, is a much braver, and nobler, and purer fellow than I ever was.

When I first resolved to write the book, I tried to realize to myself what the commonest type of English boy of the upper middle class was, so far as my experience went; and to that type I have throughout adhered, trying simply to give a good specimen of the genus. I certainly have placed him in the country, and scenes which I know best myself, for the simple reason, that I knew them better than any others, and therefore was less likely to blunder in writing about them.

As to the name, which has been, perhaps, the chief "cause of offence," in this matter, the simple facts are, that I chose the name "Brown," because it stood first in the trio of "Brown, Jones, and Robinson," which has become a sort of synonym for the middle classes of Great Britain. It happens that my own name and that of Brown have no single letter in common. As to the christian name of "Tom," having chosen Brown, I could hardly help taking it as the prefix. The two names have gone together in England for two hundred years, and the joint name has not enjoyed much of a reputation for respectability. This suited me exactly. I wanted the *commonest* name I could get, and did not want any name which had the least heroic, or aristocratic, or even respectable savor about it. Therefore I had a natural leaning to the combination which I found ready to my hand. Moreover, I believed "Tom" to be a more specially English name than John, the only other as to which I felt the least doubt. Whether it be that Thomas à Beckett was for so long the favorite English saint, or from whatever other cause, it certainly seems to be the fact, that the name "Thomas," is much commoner in England than in any other country. The words, "tom-fool," "tom-boy," etc., though, perhaps not complimentary to the "Tom's" of England, certainly show how large a family they must

have been. These reasons decided me to keep the christian name which had been always associated with "Brown"; and I own that the fact that it happened to be my own, never occurred to me as an objection, till the mischief was done, past recall.

I have only, then, to say, that neither is the hero a portrait of myself, nor is there any other portrait in either of the books, except in the case of Dr. Arnold, where the true name is given. My deep feeling of gratitude to him, and reverence for his memory, emboldened me to risk the attempt at a portrait in his case, so far as the character was necessary for the work. With these remarks, I leave this volume in the hands of readers.

T. HUGHES.

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TOM BROWN AT OXFORD.

INTRODUCTORY.

In the Michaelmas term after leaving school, Tom Brown received a summons from the authorities, and went up to matriculate at St. Ambrose's College, Oxford. He presented himself at the college one afternoon, and was examined by one of the tutors, who carried him, and several other youths in like predicament, up to the Senate House the next morning. Here they went through the usual forms of subscribing to the articles, and otherwise testifying their loyalty to the established order of things, without much thought perhaps, but in very good faith nevertheless. Having completed the ceremony, by paying his fees, our hero hurried back home, without making any stay in Oxford. He had often passed through it, so that the city had not the charm of novelty for him, and he was anxious to get home; where, as he had never spent an autumn away from school till now, for the first time in his life he was having his fill of hunting and shooting.

He had left school in June, and did not go up to reside at Oxford till the end of the following January. Seven good months; during a part of which he had indeed read for four hours or so a week with the curate of the parish, but the residue had been exclusively devoted to cricket and field sports. Now, admirable as these institutions are, and beneficial as is their influence on the youth of Britain, it is possible for a youngster to get too much of them. So it had fallen out with our hero. He was a better horseman and shot, but the total relaxation of all the healthy discipline of school, the regular hours and regular work to which he had been used for so many years, had certainly thrown him back in other ways. The whole man had not grown; so that we must not

be surprised to find him quite as boyish, now that we fall in with him again, marching down to St. Ambrose's with a porter wheeling his luggage after him on a truck, as when we left him at the end of his school career.

Tom was in truth beginning to feel that it was high time for him to be getting to regular work again of some sort. A landing place is a famous thing, but it is only enjoyable for a time by any mortal who deserves one at all. So it was with a feeling of unmixed pleasure that he turned in at the St. Ambrose gates, and inquired of the porter what rooms had been allotted to him within those venerable walls.

While the porter consulted his list, the great college sundial, over the lodge, which had lately been renovated, caught Tom's eye. The motto underneath, "Pereunt et imputantur," stood out, proud of its new gilding, in the bright afternoon sun of a frosty January day: which motto was raising sundry thoughts in his brain, when the porter came upon the right place in his list, and directed him to the end of his journey: No. 5 staircase, second quadrangle, three pair back. In which new home we shall leave him to install himself, while we endeavor to give the reader some notion of the college itself.

CHAPTER I.

ST. AMBROSE'S COLLEGE.

St. Ambrose's College was a moderate-sized one. There might have been some seventy or eighty undergraduates in residence, when our hero appeared there as a freshman. Of these, unfortunately for the college, there were a very large proportion of the gentleman-commoners; enough, in fact, with the other men whom they drew round them, and who lived pretty much as they did, to form the largest and leading set in the college. So the college was decidedly fast.

The chief characteristic of this set was the most reckless extravagance of every kind. London wine merchants furnished them with liqueurs at a guinea a bottle, and wine at five guineas a dozen; Oxford and London tailors vied with one another in providing them with unheard-of quantities of the most gorgeous clothing. They drove tandems in all directions, scattering their ample allowances, which they treated as pocket money, about roadside inns and Oxford taverns

with open hand, and "going tick" for everything which could by possibility be booked. Their cigars cost two guineas a pound; their furniture was the best that could be bought; pine-apples, forced fruit, and the most rare preserves figured at their wine parties; they hunted, rode steeplechases by day, played billiards until the gates closed, and then were ready for *vingt-et-une*, unlimited loo, and hot drink in their own rooms, as long as any one could be got to sit up and play.

The fast set then swamped, and gave the tone to the college; at which fact no persons were more astonished and horrified than the authorities of St. Ambrose.

That they of all bodies in the world should be fairly run away with by a set of reckless, loose young spendthrifts, was indeed a melancholy and unprecedented fact; for the body of fellows of St. Ambrose was as distinguished for learning, morality and respectability as any in the University. The foundation was not, indeed, actually an open one. Oriel at that time alone enjoyed this distinction; but there were a large number of open fellowships, and the income of the college was large, and the livings belonging to it numerous; so that the best men from other colleges were constantly coming in. Some of these of a former generation had been eminently successful in their management of the college. The St. Ambrose undergraduates at one time had carried off almost all the university prizes, and filled the class lists, while maintaining at the same time the highest character for manliness and gentlemanly conduct. This had lasted long enough to establish the fame of the college, and great lords and statesmen had sent their sons there; head-masters had struggled to get the names of their best pupils on the books; in short, every one who had a son, ward, or pupil, whom he wanted to push forward in the world—who was meant to cut a figure, and take the lead among men, left no stone unturned to get him into St. Ambrose's; and thought the first, and a very long step gained when he had succeeded.

But the governing bodies of colleges are always on the change, and, in the course of things men of other ideas came to rule at St. Ambrose—shrewd men of the world; men of business, some of them, with good ideas of making the most of their advantages, who said, "Go to: why should we not make the public pay for the great benefits we confer on them? Have we not the very best article in the educational

market to supply—almost a monopoly of it—and shall we not get the highest price for it?" So by degrees they altered many things in the college. In the first place, under their auspices, gentlemen-commoners increased and multiplied; in fact, the eldest sons of baronets, even squires, were scarcely admitted on any other footing. As these young gentlemen paid double fees to the college, and had great expectations of all sorts, it could not be expected that they should be subject to quite the same discipline as the common run of men, who would have to make their own way in the world. So the rules as to attendance at chapel and lectures, though nominally the same for them as for commoners, were in practice relaxed in their favour; and, that they might find all things suitable to persons in their position, the kitchen and buttery were worked up to a high state of perfection, and St. Ambrose, from having been one of the most reasonable, had come to be about the most expensive college in the university. These changes worked as their promoters probably desired that they should work, and the college was full of rich men, and commanded in the university the sort of respect which riches bring with them. But the old reputation, though still strong out of doors, was beginning sadly to wane within the university precincts. Fewer and fewer of the St. Ambrose men appeared in the class lists, or amongst the prize-men. They no longer led the debates at the Union; the boat lost place after place on the river; the eleven got beaten in all their matches. The inaugurators of these changes had passed away in their turn, and at last a reaction had commenced. The fellows recently elected, and who were in residence at the time we write of, were for the most part men of great attainments, all of them men who had taken very high honors. The electors naturally enough had chosen them as the most likely persons to restore, as tutors, the golden days of the college; and they had been careful in the selection to confine themselves to very quiet and studious men, such as were likely to remain up at Oxford, passing over men of more popular manners and active spirits, who would be sure to flit soon into the world, and be of little more service to St. Ambrose.

But these were not the men to get any hold on the fast set who were now in the ascendant. It was not in the nature of things that they should understand each other; in fact, they were hopelessly at war, and the college was getting more and more out of gear in consequence.

What they could do, however, they were doing; and under their fostering care were growing up a small set, including most of the scholars, who were likely, as far as they were concerned, to retrieve the college character of the schools. But they were too much like their tutors, men who did little else but read. They neither wished for, nor were likely to gain, the slightest influence on the fast set. The best men amongst them, too, were diligent readers of the *Tracts for the Times*, and followers of the able leaders of the High-church party, which was then a growing one; and this led them also to form such friendships as they made amongst out-college men of their own way of thinking—with high churchmen, rather than St. Ambrose men. So they lived very much to themselves, and scarcely interfered with the dominant party.

Lastly, there was the boating set, which was beginning to revive in the college, partly from the natural disgust of any body of young Englishmen, at finding themselves distanced in an exercise requiring strength and pluck, and partly from the fact, that the captain for the time being was one of the best oars in the University boat, and also a deservedly popular character. He was now in his third year of residence, had won the pair-oar race, and had pulled seven in the great yearly match with Cambridge, and by constant hard work had managed to carry the St. Ambrose boat up to the fifth place on the river. He will be introduced to you, gentle reader, when the proper time comes; at present, we are only concerned with a bird's-eye view of the college, that you may feel more or less at home in it. The boating set was not so separate or marked as the reading set, melting on one side into, and keeping up more or less connexion with, the fast set, and also commanding a sort of half allegiance from most of the men who belonged to neither of the other sets. The minor divisions, of which of course there were many, need not be particularized, as the above general classification will be enough for the purposes of this history.

Our hero, on leaving school, having bound himself solemnly to write all his doings and thoughts to the friend whom he had left behind him: distance and separation were to make no difference whatever in their friendship. This compact had been made on one of their last evenings at Rugby. They were sitting together in the six-form room, Tom splicing the handle of a favourite cricket bat, and

Arthur reading a volume of Raleigh's works. The Doctor had lately been alluding to the "History of the World," and had excited the curiosity of the active-minded amongst his pupils about the great navigator, statesman, soldier, author, the fine gentleman. So Raleigh's works were seized on by various voracious young readers, and carried out of the school library; and Arthur was now deep in a volume of the "Miscellanies," curled up on a corner of the sofa. Presently, Tom heard something between a groan and a protest, and, looking up, demanded explanations; in answer to which, Arthur, in a voice half furious and half fearful, read out:—

"And be sure of this, thou shalt never find a friend in thy young years whose conditions and qualities will please thee after thou comest to more discretion and judgment; and then all thou givest is lost, and all wherein thou shalt trust such a one will be discovered."

"You don't mean that's Raleigh's?"

"Yes—here it is, in his first letter to his son."

"What a cold-blooded old Philistine," said Tom.

"But it can't be true, do you think?" said Arthur.

And, in short, after some personal reflections on Sir Walter, they then and there resolved that, so far as they were concerned, it was not, could not, and should not be true; that they would remain faithful, the same to each other, and the greatest friends in the world, through I know not what separations, trials, and catastrophes. And for the better insuring this result, a correspondence, regular as the recurring months, was to be maintained. It had already lasted through the long vacation and up to Christmas without sensibly dragging, though Tom's letters had been something of the shortest in November, when he had lots of shooting, and two days a week with the hounds. Now, however, having fairly got to Oxford, he determined to make up for all short-comings. His first letter from college, taken in connexion with the previous sketch of the place, will probably accomplish the work of introduction better than any detailed account by a third party; and it is therefore given here verbatim:—

"*St. Ambrose, Oxford,*
"*February, 184—.*

"My dear Geordie,

"According to promise, I write to tell you how I get on up here, and what sort of a place Oxford is. Of course, I

don't know much about it yet, having only been up some two weeks; but you shall have my first impressions.

"Well, first and foremost, it's an awfully idle place; at any rate, for us freshmen. Fancy now. I am in twelve lectures a week of an hour each—Greek Testament, first book of Herodotus, second Æneid, and first book of Euclid! There's a treat! Two hours a day; all over by twelve, or one at latest; and no extra work at all, in the shape of copies of verses, themes, or other exercises.

"I think sometimes I'm back in the lower fifth; for we don't get through more than we used to do there; and if you were to hear the men construe, it would make your hair stand on end. Where on earth can they have come from? unless they blunder on purpose, as I often think. Of course, I never look at a lecture before I go in, I know it all nearly by heart, so it would be sheer waste of time. I hope I shall take to reading something or other by myself; but you know I never was much of a hand at sapping, and, for the present, the light work suits me well enough, for there's plenty to see and learn about in this place.

"We keep very gentlemanly hours. Chapel every morning at eight, and evening at seven. You must attend once a day, and twice on Sundays—at least, that's the rule of our college—and be in gates by twelve o'clock at night. Besides which, if you're a decently steady fellow, you ought to dine in hall perhaps four days a week. Hall is at five o'clock. And now you have the sum total. All the rest of your time you may just do what you like with.

"So much for our work and hours. Now for the place. Well, it's a grand old place, certainly; and I dare say, if a fellow goes straight in it, and gets creditably through his three years, he may end by loving it as much as we do the old school-house and quadrangle at Rugby. Our college is a fair specimen: a venerable old front of crumbling stone fronting the street, into which two or three other colleges look also. Over the gateway is a large room, where the college examinations go on, when there are any; and, as you enter, you pass the porters lodge, where resides our janitor, a bustling little man, with a pot belly, whose business it is to put down the time at which the men come in at night, and to keep all discommonsed tradesmen, stray dogs, and bad characters generally, out of the college.

"The large quadrangle into which you come first, is bigger than ours at Rugby, and a much more solemn and

sleepy sort of a place, with its gables and old mullioned windows. One side is occupied by the hall and chapel; the principal's house takes up half another side; and the rest is divided into staircases, on each of which are six or eight sets of rooms, inhabited by us undergraduates, and here and there a tutor or fellow dropped down amongst us (in the first-floor rooms, of course), not exactly to keep order, but to act as a sort of ballast. This quadrangle is the show part of the college, and is generally respectable and quiet, which is a good deal more than can be said for the inner quadrangle, which you get at through a passage leading out of the other. The rooms ain't half so large or good in the inner quad; and here's where all we freshmen live, besides a lot of the older undergraduates who don't care to change their rooms. Only one tutor has rooms here; and I should think, if he's a reading man, it won't be long before he clears out; for all sorts of high jinks go on on the grass-plot, and the row on the staircases is often as bad, and not half so respectable, as it used to be in the middle passage in the last week of the half-year.

"My rooms are what they call garrets, right up in the roof, with a commanding view of the college tiles and chimney pots, and of houses at the back. No end of cats, both college Toms and strangers, haunt the neighbourhood, and I am rapidly learning cat-talking from them; but I'm not going to stand it—I don't want to know cat-talk. The college Toms are protected by the statutes, I believe; but I'm going to buy an air-gun for the benefit of the strangers. My rooms are pleasant enough, at the top of the kitchen staircase, and separated from all mankind by a great, iron-clamped, outer door, my oak, which I sport when I go out or want to be quiet; sittingroom eighteen by twelve, bedroom twelve by eight, and a little cupboard for the scout.

"Ah, Geordie, the scout is an institution! Fancy me waited upon and valeted by a stout party in black of quiet, gentlemanly manners, like the benevolent father in a comedy. He takes the deepest interest in all my possessions and proceedings, and is evidently used to good society, to judge by the amount of crockery and glass, wines, liquors, and grocery, which he thinks indispensable for my due establishment. He has also been good enough to recommend to me many tradesmen who are ready to supply these articles in any quantities; each of whom has been here already a dozen times, cap in hand, and vowing that it is

quite immaterial when I pay—which is very kind of them; but, with the highest respect for friend Perkins (my scout) and his obliging friends, I shall make some enquiries before "letting in" with any of them. He waits on me in hall, where we go in full fig of cap and gown at five, and get very good dinners, and cheap enough. It is rather a fine old room, with a good, arched, black oak ceiling and high panelling, hung round with pictures of old swells, bishops and lords chiefly, who have endowed the college in some way, or at least have fed here in times gone by, and for whom, "caeterisque benefactoribus nostris," we daily give thanks in a long Latin grace, which one of the undergraduates (I think it must be) goes and rattles out at the end of the high table, and then comes down again from the dias to his own place. No one feeds at the high table except the dons and the gentlemen-commoners, who are undergraduates in velvet caps and silk gowns. Why they wear these instead of cloth and serge I haven't yet made out, I believe it is because they pay double fees; but they seem uncommonly wretched up at the high table, and I should think would sooner pay double to come to the other end of the hall.

"The chapel is a quaint little place, about the size of the chancel of Lutterworth Church. It just holds us all comfortably. The attendance is regular enough, but I don't think the men care about it a bit in general. Several I can see bring in Euclids, and other lecture books, and the service is gone through at a great pace. I couldn't think at first why some of the men seemed so uncomfortable and stiff about the legs at morning service, but I find that they are the hunting set, and come in with pea-coats over their pinks, and trousers over their leather breeches and top-boots; which accounts for it. There are a few others who seem very devout, and bow a good deal, and turn towards the altar at different parts of the service. These are of the Oxford High-church school, I believe; but I shall soon find out more about them. On the whole I feel less at home at present, I am sorry to say, in the chapel, than anywhere else.

"I was very near forgetting a great institution of the college, which is the buttery-hatch, just opposite the hall-door. Here abides the fat old butler (all the servants at St. Ambrose's are portly), and serves out limited bread, butter, and cheese, and unlimited beer brewed by himself, for an

hour in the morning, at noon, and again at supper-time. Your scout always fetches you a pint or so on each occasion, in case you should want it, and if you don't, it falls to him; but I can't say that my fellow gets much, for I am naturally a thirsty soul, and cannot often resist the malt myself, coming up as it does, fresh and cool, in one of the silver tankards, of which we seem to have an endless supply.

"I spent a day or two in the first week, before I got shaken down into my place here, in going round and seeing the other colleges, and finding out what great men had been at each (one got a taste for that sort of work from the Doctor, and I'd nothing else to do). Well, I never was more interested: fancy ferreting out Wycliffe, the Black Prince, our friend Sir Walter Raleigh, Pym, Hampden, Laud, Ireton, Butler, and Addison, in one afternoon. I walked about two inches taller in my trencher cap after it. Perhaps I may be going to make dear friends with some fellow who will change the history of England. Why shouldn't I? There must have been freshmen once who were chums of Wycliffe of Queen's, or Raleigh of Oriel. I mooned up and down the High-street, staring at all the young faces in caps, and wondering which of them would turn out great generals, or statesmen, or poets. Some of them will, of course, for there must be a dozen at least, I should think, in every generation of undergraduates, who will have a good deal to say to the ruling and guiding of the British nation before they die.

"But, after all, the river is the feature of Oxford, to my mind; a glorious stream, not five minutes' walk from the colleges, broad enough in most places for three boats to row abreast. I expect I will take to boating furiously: I have been down the river three or four times already with some other freshmen, and it is glorious exercise; that I can see, though we bungle and cut crabs desperately at present.

"Here's a long yarn I'm spinning for you; and I dare say after all you'll say it tells you nothing, and you'd rather have twenty lines about the men, and what they're thinking about and the meaning, and the inner life of the place, and all that. Patience, patience! I don't know anything about it myself yet, and have had only time to look at the shell, which is a very handsome and stately affair; you shall have the kernel, if I ever get at it, in due time.

"And now write me a long letter directly, and tell me about the Doctor, and who are in the Sixth, and how the

house goes on, and what sort of an eleven there'll be, and what you are doing and thinking about. Come up here and try for a scholarship; I'll take you in and show you the lions. Remember me to old friends.—Ever your affectionately, T. B."

CHAPTER II.

A ROW ON THE RIVER.

WITHIN a day or two of the penning of this celebrated epistle, which created quite a sensation in the sixth-form room as it went the round after tea, Tom realized one of the objects of his young Oxford ambition, and succeeded in embarking on the river in a skiff by himself, with such results as are now described. He had already been down several times in pair-oar and four-oar boats, with an old oar to pull stroke, and another to steer and coach the young idea, but he was not satisfied with these essays. He could not believe that he was such a bad oar as the old hands made him out to be, and thought that it must be the fault of the other freshmen who were learning with him that the boat made so little way and rolled so much. He had been such a proficient in all the Rugby games, that he couldn't realize the fact of his unreadiness in a boat. Pulling looked a simple thing enough—much easier than tennis; and he had made a capital start at the latter game, and been highly complimented by the marker after his first hour in the little court. He forgot that cricket and fives are capital training for tennis, but that rowing is a speciality, of the rudiments of which he was wholly ignorant. And so, in full confidence that, if he could only have a turn or two alone, he should not only satisfy himself, but everybody else, that he was a heaven-born oar, he refused all offers of companionship, and started on the afternoon of a fine February day down to the boats for his trial trip. He had watched his regular companions well out of college, and gave them enough start to make sure that they would be off before he himself could arrive at St. Ambrose's dressing room at Hall's, and chuckled, as he came within sight of the river, to see the freshmen's boat in which he generally performed,

go plunging away past the University barge, keeping three different times with four oars, and otherwise demeaning itself so as to become an object of mirthful admiration to all beholders.

Tom was punted across to Hall's in a state of great content, which increased when, in answer to his casual inquiry, the managing man informed him that not a man of his college was about the place. So he ordered a skiff with as much dignity and coolness as he could command, and hastened up stairs to dress. He appeared again, carrying his boating coat and cap. They were quite new, so he would not wear them: nothing about him should betray the freshman on this day if he could help it.

"Is my skiff ready?"

"All right, sir; this way, sir;" said the manager, conducting him to a good, safe-looking craft. "Any gentleman going to steer, sir?"

"No." said Tom, superciliously; "You may take out the rudder."

"Going quite alone, sir? Better take one of our boys—find you a very light one. Here, Bill!"—and he turned to summons a juvenile waterman to take charge of our hero.

"Take out the rudder, do you hear?" interrupted Tom. "I won't have a steerer."

"Well, sir, as you please," said the manager, proceeding to remove the degrading appendage. "The river's rather high, please to remember, sir. You must mind the mill-stream at Iffley Lock. I suppose you can swim?"

"Yes, of course," said Tom, settling himself on his cushion. "Now, shove her off."

The next moment he was well out in the stream, and left to his own resources. He got his sculls out successfully enough, and, though feeling by no means easy on his seat, proceeded to pull very deliberately past the barges, stopping his sculls in the air to feather accurately, in the hopes of deceiving spectators into the belief that he was an old hand just going out for a gentle paddle. The manager watched him for a minute, and turned to his work with an aspiration that he might not come to grief.

But no thought of grief was on Tom's mind as he dropped gently down, impatient for the time when he should pass the mouth of the Cherwell, and so, having no longer critical eyes to fear, might put out his whole strength, and give himself at least if not the world, assurance of a waterman.

The day was a very fine one, a bright sun shining, and a nice fresh breeze blowing across the stream, but not enough to ruffle the water seriously. Some heavy storms up Gloucestershire way had cleared the air, and swollen the stream at the same time; in fact, the river was as full as it could be without overflowing its banks—a state in which, of all others, it is the least safe for boating experiments. Fortunately, in those days there were no outriggers. Even the racing skiffs were comparatively safe craft, and would now be characterized as tubs; while the real tubs (in one of the safest of which the prudent manager had embarked our hero) were of such build that it required considerable ingenuity actually to upset them.

If any ordinary amount of bungling could have done it, Tom's voyage would have terminated within a hundred yards of the Cherwell. While he had been sitting quiet and merely paddling, and almost letting the stream carry him down, the boat had trimmed well enough; but now, taking a long breath, he leaned forward, and dug his sculls into the water, pulling them through with all his strength. The consequence of this feat was that the handles of the sculls came into violent collision in the middle of the boat, the knuckles of his right hand were barked, his left scull unshipped, and the head of his skiff almost blown round by the wind before he could restore order on board.

"Never mind; try again," thought he, after the first sensation of disgust had passed off, and a glance at the shore showed him that there were no witnesses. "Of course, I forgot, one hand must go over the other. It might have happened to any one. Let me see, which hand shall I keep uppermost: the left, that's the weakest." And away he went again, keeping his newly-acquired fact painfully in mind, and so avoiding further collision amidships for four or five strokes. But, as in other sciences, the giving of undue prominence to one fact brings others inexorably on the head of the student to avenge his neglect of them, so it happened with Tom in his practical study of the science of rowing that by thinking of his hands he forgot his seat, and the necessity of trimming properly. Whereupon the old tub began to rock fearfully, and the next moment he missed the water altogether with his right scull, and subsided backwards, not without struggles, into the bottom of the boat; while the half stroke which he had pulled with his left hand sent her head well into the bank.

Tom picked himself up, and settled himself on his bench again, a sadder and wiser man, as the truth began to dawn upon him that pulling, especially sculling, does not, like reading and writing, come by nature. However, he addressed himself manfully to his task ; savage indeed, and longing to drive a hole in the bottom of the old tub, but as resolved as ever to get to Sandford and back before hall time, or perish in the attempt.

He shoved himself off the bank, and warned by his last mishap, got out into mid stream, and there, moderating his ardor, and contenting himself with a slow and steady stroke, was progressing satisfactorily, and beginning to recover his temper, when a loud shout startled him; and, looking over his shoulder at the imminent risk of an upset, he beheld the fast sailor the Dart, close hauled on a wind, and almost aboard of him. Utterly ignorant of what was the right thing to do, he held on his course, and passed close under the bows of the miniature cutter, the steersman having jammed his helm hard down, shaking her in the wind, to prevent running over the skiff, and solacing himself with pouring maledictions on Tom and his craft, in which the man who had hold of the sheets, and the third, who was lounging in the bows, heartily joined. Tom was out of ear-shot before he had collected vituperation enough to hurl back at them, and was, moreover, already in the difficult navigation of the Gut, where, notwithstanding all his efforts, he again ran aground; but, with this exception, he arrived without other mishap at Iffley, where he lay on his sculls with much satisfaction, and shouted, "Lock—lock!"

The lock-keeper appeared to the summons, but instead of opening the gates seized a long boat-hook, and rushed towards our hero, calling upon him to mind the mill-stream, and pull his right-hand scull; notwithstanding which warning, Tom was within an ace of drifting past the entrance to the lock, in which case assuredly his boat, if not he, had never returned whole. However, the lock-keeper managed to catch the stern of his skiff with the boat-hook, and drag him back into the proper channel, and then opened the lock-gates for him. Tom congratulated himself as he entered the lock that there were no other boats going through with him; but his evil star was in the ascendant, and all things, animate and inanimate, seemed to be leagued together to humiliate him. As the water began to fall rapidly, he lost his hold of the chain, and the tub instantly

drifted across the lock, and was in imminent danger of sticking and breaking her back, when the lock-keeper again came to the rescue with his boat-hook; and, guessing the state of the case, did not quit him until he had safely shoved him and his boat well out into the pool below, with an exhortation to mind and go outside of the barge which was coming up.

Tom started on the latter half of his outward voyage with the sort of look which Cato must have worn when he elected the losing side, and all the gods went over to the winning one. But his previous struggles had not been thrown away, and he managed to keep the right side of the barge, turn the corner without going around, and zigzag down Kennington reach, slowly indeed, but with much labor, but at any rate safely. Rejoicing in this feat, he stopped at the island, and recreated himself with a glass of beer, looking now hopefully towards Sandford, which lay within easy distance, now upwards again along the reach which he had just overcome, and solacing himself with the remembrance of a dictum, which he had heard from a great authority, that it was always easier to steer up stream than down, from which he argued that the worst part of his trial trip was now over.

Presently he saw a skiff turn the corner at the top of the Kennington reach, and, resolving in his mind to get to Sandford before the new comer, paid for his beer, and betook himself again to his tub. He got pretty well off, and, the island shutting out his unconscious rival from his view, worked away at first under the pleasing delusion that he was holding his own. But he was soon undecieved, for in monstrously short time the pursuing skiff showed around the corner, and bore down on him. He never relaxed his efforts, but could not help watching the enemy as he came up with him hand over hand, and envying the perfect ease with which he seemed to be pulling his long steady stroke and the precision with which he steered, scarcely ever casting a look over his shoulder. He was hugging the Berkshire side himself, as the other skiff passed him, and thought he heard the sculler say something about keeping out, and minding the small lasher; but the noise of the waters and his own desperate efforts prevented his heeding, or, indeed, hearing the warning plainly. In another minute, however, he heard plainly enough most energetic shouts behind him and, turning his head over his right shoulder, saw

the man who had just passed him backing his skiff rapidly up stream towards him. The next moment he felt the bows of his boat whirl round, the old tub grounded for a moment, and then, turning over on her side, shot him out on to the planking of the steep descent into the small lasher. He grasped at the boards, but they were too slippery to hold, and the rush of water was too strong for him, and rolling him over and over like a piece of driftwood, plunged him into the pool below.

After the first moment of astonishment and fright was over, Tom left himself to the stream, holding his breath hard, and paddling gently with his hands, feeling sure that, if he could only hold on, he should come to the surface sooner or later; which accordingly happened after a somewhat lengthy submersion.

His first impulse on rising to the surface, after catching his breath, was to strike out for the shore, but, in the act of doing so, he caught sight of the other skiff coming stern foremost down the decent after him, and he trod the water and drew in his breath to watch. Down she came, as straight as an arrow, into the tumult below; the sculler sitting upright, and holding his sculls steadily in the water. For a moment she seemed to be going under, but righted herself, and glided swiftly into the still water; and then the sculler cast a hasty and anxious glance around, till his eyes rested on our hero's half-drowned head.

"Oh, there you are!" he said, looking much relieved; "all right, I hope. Not hurt, eh?"

"No, thankee; all right, I believe," answered Tom. "What shall I do?"

"Swim ashore; I'll look after your boat." So Tom took the advice, swam ashore, and there stood dripping and watching the other as he righted the old tub, which was floating quietly bottom upwards, little the worse for the mishap, and no doubt, if boats can wish, earnestly desiring in her wooden mind to be allowed to go quietly to pieces then and there, sooner to be rescued than be again entrusted to the guidance of freshmen.

The tub having been brought to the bank, the stranger started again, and collected the sculls and bottom boards, which were floating about here and there in the pool, and also succeeded in making salvage of Tom's coat, the pockets of which held his watch, purse, and cigar case. These

he brought to the bank, and delivering them over, inquired whether there was anything else to look after.

"Thank you, no; nothing but my cap. Never mind it. It's luck enough not to have lost the coat," said Tom, holding up the dripping garment to let the water run out of the arms and pocket-holes, and then wringing it as well as he could. "At any rate," thought he, "I needn't be afraid of its looking too new any more,"

The stranger put off again, and made one more round, searching for the cap and anything else which he might have overlooked, but without success. While he was doing so, Tom had time to look him well over, and see what sort of a man had come to his rescue. He hardly knew at the time the full extent of his obligation—at least if this sort of obligation is to be reckoned not so much by the service actually rendered, as by the risk encountered to be able to render it. There were probably not three men in the University who would have dared to shoot the lasher in a skiff in its then state, for it was in those times a really dangerous place; and Tom himself had an extraordinary escape, for, as Miller, the St. Ambrose coxswain, remarked on hearing the story, "No one who wasn't born to be hung could have rolled down it without knocking his head against something hard, and going down like lead when he got to the bottom."

He was very well satisfied with his inspection. The other man was evidently a year or two older than himself, his figure was more set, and he had stronger whiskers than are generally grown at twenty. He was somewhere about five feet ten in height, very deep-chested, and with long powerful arms and hands. There was no denying, however, that at the first glance he was an ugly man; he was marked with small-pox, had large features, high cheek-bones, deeply set eyes, and a very long chin: and had got the trick which many underhung men have of compressing his upper lip. Nevertheless, there was that in his face which hit Tom's fancy, and made him anxious to know his rescuer better. He had an instinct that good was to be gotten out of him. So he was very glad when the search was ended, and the stranger came to the bank, shipped his sculls, and jumped out with the painter of his skiff in his hand, which he proceeded to fasten to an old stump, while he remarked—

"I'm afraid the cap's lost."

"It doesn't matter the least. Thank you for coming to help me; it was very kind indeed, and more than I expected. Don't they say that one Oxford man will never save another from drowning unless they have been introduced?"

"I don't know," replied the other; "are you sure you're not hurt?"

"Yes, quite," said Tom, foiled in what he considered an artful plan to get the stranger to introduce himself.

"Then we're very well out of it," said the other, looking at the steep descent into the lasher, and the rolling tumbling rush of the water below.

"Indeed we are," said Tom; "but how in the world did you manage not to upset?"

"I hardly know myself—I had shipped a good deal of water, you see. Perhaps I ought to have jumped out on the bank and come across to you, leaving my skiff in the river, for if I had upset I couldn't have helped you much. However, I followed my instinct, which was to come the quickest way. I thought, too, that if I could manage to get down in the boat I should be of more use. I am very glad I did it," he added after a moment's pause; "I'm really proud of having come down that place."

"So ain't I," said Tom, with a laugh, in which the other joined.

"But now you're getting chilled," and he turned from the lasher and looked at Tom's chattering jaws.

"Oh, it's nothing. I'm used to being wet."

"But you may just as well be comfortable if you can. Here's this rough jersey which I use instead of a coat; pull off that wet cotton affair, and put it on, and then we'll get to work, for we have plenty to do."

After a little persuasion Tom did as he was bid, and got into the great woolen garment, which was very comforting; and then the two set about getting their skiffs back into the main stream. This was comparatively easy as to the lighter skiff, which was soon baled out and hauled by main force on to the bank, carried across and launched again. The tub gave them much more trouble, for she was quite full of water and very heavy; but after twenty minutes or so of hard work, during which the mutual respect of the labourers for the strength and willingness of each other was much increased, she also lay in the main stream, leaking considerably, but otherwise not much the worse for her adventure.

"Now what do you mean to do?" said the stranger. "I don't think you can pull home in her. One doesn't know how much she may be damaged. She may sink in the lock, or play any prank."

"But what am I to do with her?"

"Oh, you can leave her at Sandford and walk up, and send one of Hall's boys after her. Or, if you like, I will tow her up behind my skiff."

"Won't your skiff carry two?"

"Yes; if you like to come I'll take you, but you must sit very quiet."

"Can't we go down to Sandford first and have a glass of ale? What time is it?—the water has stopped my watch."

"A quarter past three. I have about twenty minutes to spare."

"Come along, then, said Tom; "but will you let me pull your skiff down to Sandford? I resolved to pull to Sandford to-day, and don't like to give it up."

"By all means, if you like," said the other, with a smile; "jump in, and I'll walk along the bank."

"Thank you," said Tom, hurrying into the skiff, in which he completed the remaining quarter of a mile, while the owner walked by the side, watching him.

They met on the bank at the little inn by Sandford lock, and had a glass of ale, over which Tom confessed that it was the first time he had ever navigated a skiff by himself, and gave a detailed account of his adventures, to the great amusement of his companion. And by the time they rose to go, it was settled, at Tom's earnest request, that he should pull the sound skiff up, while his companion sat in the stern and coached him. The other consented very kindly, merely stipulating that he himself should take the sculls, if it should prove that Tom could not pull them up in time for hall dinner. So they started, and took the tub in tow when they came up to it. Tom got on famously under his new tutor, who taught him to get forward, and open his knees properly, and throw his weight on to the sculls at the beginning of the stroke. He managed even to get into Iffley lock on the way up without fouling the gates, and was then and there complimented on his progress. Whereupon, as they sat, while the lock filled, Tom poured out his thanks to his tutor for his instruction, which had been given so judiciously that, while he was conscious of improving at every stroke, he did not feel that the other was asserting any superiority

over him; and so, though more humble than at the most disastrous period of his downward voyage, he was getting into a better temper every minute.

It is a great pity that some of our instructors in more important matters than sculling will not take a leaf out of the same book. Of course, it is more satisfactory to one's own self-love, to make every one who comes to one to learn, feel that he is a fool, and we wise men; but if our object is to teach well and usefully what we know ourselves there cannot be a worse method. No man, however, is likely to adopt it, so long as he is conscious that he has anything himself to learn from his pupils; and as soon as he has arrived at the conviction that they can teach him nothing—that it is henceforth to be all give and no take—the sooner he throws up his office of teacher, the better it will be for himself, his pupils, and his country, whose sons he is misguiding.

On their way up, so intent were they on their own work that it was not until shouts of "Hello, Brown! how did you get there? Why, you said you were not going down to-day," greeted them just above the Gut, that they were aware of the presence of the freshmen's four-oar of St. Ambrose College, which had with some trouble succeeded in overtaking them.

"I said I wasn't going down with *you*," shouted Tom, grinding away harder than ever, that they might witness and wonder at his prowess.

"Oh, I dare say! Whose skiff are you towing up? I believe you've been upset."

Tom made no reply, and the four-oar floundered on ahead.

"Are you at St. Ambrose's?" asked his sitter, after a minute.

"Yes; that's my treadmill, that four-oar. I've been down in it almost every day since I came up, and very poor fun it is. So I thought to-day I would go on my own hook, and see if I couldn't make a better hand of it. And I have too, I know, thanks to you."

The other made no remark, but a little shade came over his face. He had no chance of making out Tom's college, as the new cap which would have betrayed him had disappeared in the lasher. He himself wore a glazed straw hat, which was of no college; so that up to this time neither of them had known to what college the other belonged.

When they landed at Hall's, Tom was at once involved in a wrangle with the manager as to the amount of damage done to the tub; which the latter refused to assess before he knew what had happened to it; while our hero vigorously and with reason maintained, that if he knew his business it could not matter what had happened to the boat. There she was, and he must say whether she was better or worse, or how much worse than when she started. In the middle of which dialogue his new acquaintance, touching his arm, said, "You can leave my jersey with your own things; I shall get it to-morrow," and then disappeared.

Tom, when he had come to terms with his adversary, ran upstairs, expecting to find the other, and meaning to tell his name, and find out who it was that had played the good Samaritan by him. He was much annoyed when he found the coast clear, and dressed in a grumbling humour. "I wonder why he should have gone off so quick. He might just as well have stayed and walked up with me," thought he. "Let me see, though; didn't he say I was to leave his jersey in our room, with my own things? Why, perhaps he is a St. Ambrose man himself. But then he would have told me so, surely. I don't remember to have seen his face in chapel or hall; but then there is such a lot of new faces, and he may not sit near me. However I mean to find him out before long, whoever he may be." With which resolve Tom crossed in the punt into Christ's Church meadow, and strolled college-wards, feeling that he had had a good hard afternoon's exercise, and was much the better for it. He might have satisfied his curiosity at once by simply asking the manager who it was that had arrived with him; and this occurred to him before he got home, whereat he felt satisfied, but would not go back then, as it was so near hall time. He would be sure to remember it the first thing to-morrow.

As it happened, however, he had not so long to wait for the information which he needed; for scarcely had he sat down in hall and ordered his dinner, when he caught sight of his boating acquaintance, who walked in habited in a gown which Tom took for a scholar's. He took his seat at a little table in the middle of the hall, near the bachelors' table, but quite away from the rest of the undergraduates, at which sat four or five other men in similar gowns. He either did not or would not notice the looks of recognition which Tom kept firing at him until he had taken his seat.

"Who is that man that has just come in, do you know?" said Tom to his next neighbour, a second-term man.

"Which?" said the other, looking up.

"That one over at the little table in the middle of the hall, with the dark whiskers. There, he has just turned rather from us, and put his arm on the table."

"Oh, his name is Hardy."

"Do you know him?"

"No; I don't think anybody does. They say he is a clever fellow, but a very queer one."

"Why does he sit at that table!"

"He is one of our servitors; they all sit there together."

"Oh," said Tom, not much wiser for the information, but resolved to waylay Hardy as soon as the hall was over, and highly delighted to find that they were after all of the same college; for he had already begun to find out, that however friendly you may be with out-college men, you must live chiefly with those of your own. But now his scout brought his dinner, and he fell to with the appetite of a freshman on his ample commons.

CHAPTER III.

A BREAKFAST AT DRYSDALE'S.

No man in St. Ambrose College gave such breakfasts as Drysdale. Not the great heavy spreads for thirty or forty, which came once or twice a term, when everything was supplied out of the college kitchen, and you had to ask leave of the Dean before you could have it at all. In those ponderous feasts the most hum-drum of the undergraduate kind might rival the most artistic, if he could only pay his battle-bill, or get credit with the cook. But the daily morning meal, when even gentlemen-commoners were limited to two hot dishes out of the kitchen, this was Drysdale's forte. Ordinary men left the matter in the hands of scouts, and were content with the ever recurring buttered toasts and eggs, with a dish of broiled ham, or something of the sort with a marmalade and bitter ale to finish with; but Drysdale was not an ordinary man, as you felt in a moment when you went to breakfast with him for the first time.

The staircase on which he lived was inhabited, except in the garrets, by men in the fast set, and he and three others, who had an equal aversion to solitary feeding, had established a breakfast-club, in which, thanks to Drysdale's genius, real scientific gastronomy was cultivated. Every morning the boy from the Weirs arrived with freshly caught gudgeon, and now and then an eel or trout, which the scouts on the staircase had learnt to fry delicately in oil. Fresh watercresses came in the same basket, and the college kitchen furnished a spitchedcocked chicken, or grilled turkey's leg. In the season there were plover's eggs; or, at the worst, there was a dainty omelette; and a distant baker, famed for his light rolls and high charges, sent in the bread—the common domestic college loaf being of course out of the question for any one with the slightest pretension to taste, and fit only for the perquisite of scouts. Then there would be a deep Yorkshire pie, or reservoir of potted game, as a *pièce de résistance*, and three or four sorts of preserves; and a large cool tankard of cider or ale-cup to finish up with, or soda-water and maraschino for a change. Tea and coffee were there indeed, but merely as a compliment to those respectable beverages, for they were rarely touched by the breakfast eaters of No. 3 staircase. Pleasant young gentlemen they were on No. 3 staircase; I mean the ground and first-floor men who formed the breakfast-club, for the garrets were nobodies. Three out of the four were gentlemen-commoners, with allowances of 500*l.* a year at least each; and, as they treated their allowances as pocket-money, and were all in their first year, ready money was plenty and credit good, and they might have had potted hippopotamus for breakfast if they had chosen to order it, which they would most likely have done if they had thought of it.

Two out of the three were the sons of rich men who made their own fortunes, and sent their sons to St. Ambrose's because it was very desirable that the young gentlemen should make good connexions. In fact, the fathers looked upon the University as a good investment, and gloried much in hearing their sons talk familiarly in the vacations of their dear friends Lord Harry This and Sir George That.

Drysdale, the third of the set, was the heir of an old as well as of a rich family, and consequently, having his connexion ready made to his hand, cared little enough with

whom he associated, provided they were pleasant fellows, and gave him good food and wines. His whole idea at present was to enjoy himself as much as possible; but he had good manly stuff in him at the bottom, and, had he fallen into any but the fast set, would have made a fine fellow, and done credit to himself and his college.

The fourth man at the breakfast-club, the Hon. Piers St. Cloud, was in his third year, and was a very well-dressed, well-mannered, well-connected young man. His allowance was small for the set he lived with, but he never wanted for anything. He didn't entertain much, certainly, but when he did, everything was in the best possible style. He was very exclusive, and knew no man in college out of the fast set; and of these he addicted himself chiefly to the society of the rich freshmen, for somehow the men of his own standing seemed a little shy of him. But with the freshmen he was always hand and glove, lived in their rooms, and used their wines, horses, and other movable property as his own. Being a good whist and billiard player, and not a bad jockey, he managed in one way or another to make his young friends pay well for the honour of his acquaintance; as, indeed, why should they not, at least those of them who came to the college to form eligible connexions; for had not his remote lineal ancestor come over in the same ship with William the Conqueror? were not all his relations about the Court, as lords and ladies in waiting, white sticks or black rods, and in the innermost of all possible circles of the great world; and was there a better coat of arms than he bore in all Burke's Peerage?

Our hero had met Drysdale at a house in the country shortly before the beginning of his first term, and they had rather taken to one another. Drysdale had been amongst his first callers; and, as he came out of chapel one morning shortly after his arrival, Drysdale's scout came up to him with an invitation to breakfast. So he went to his own rooms, ordered his commons to be taken across to No. 3, and followed himself a few minutes afterwards. No one was in the rooms when he arrived, for none of the club had finished their toilettes. Morning chapel was not meant for, or cultivated by gentlemen-commoners; they paid double chapel fees, in consideration of which, probably, they were not expected to attend so often as the rest of the undergraduates; at any rate, they didn't, and no harm came to them in consequence of their absence. As Tom entered, a

great splashing in an inner room stopped for a moment, and Drysdale's voice shouted out that he was in his tub, but would be with him in a minute. So Tom gave himself up to the contemplation of the rooms in which his fortunate acquaintance dwelt; and very pleasant rooms they were. The large room, in which the breakfast-table was laid for five, was lofty and well-proportioned, and panelled with old oak, and the furniture was handsome and solid, and in keeping with the room.

There were four deep windows, high up in the wall, with cushioned seats under them, two looking into the large quadrangle, and two into the inner one. Outside these windows, Drysdale had rigged up hanging gardens, which were kept full of flowers by the first nurseryman in Oxford all the year round; so that even on this February morning, the scent of gardania and violets pervaded the room, and strove for mastery with the smell of stale tobacco, which hung about the curtains and sofas. There was a large glass in an oak frame over the mantlepiece, which was loaded with choice pipes and cigar cases, and quaint receptacles for tobacco; and by the side of the glass hung small carved oak frames, containing lists of the meets of the Heythrop, the Old Berkshire, and Drake's hounds, for the current week. There was a queer assortment of well-framed paintings and engravings on the walls; some of considerable merit, especially some water-color and sea-pieces and engravings from Landseer's pictures, mingled with which hung Taglioni and Cerito, in short petticoats and impossible attitudes; Phosphurous winning the Derby; the Death of Grimaldi (the famous steeple-chase horse—not poor old Joe); an American Trotting Match, and Jem Belcher and Deaf Burke in attitudes of self-defence. Several tandem and riding whips, mounted in heavy silver, and a double-barrelled gun, and fishing rods, occupied one corner, and a polished copper cask, holding about five gallons of mild ale, stood in another. In short, there was plenty of everything except books—the literature of the world being represented, so far as Tom could make out in his short scrutiny, by a few well-bound but badly used volumes of classics, with the cribs thereto appertaining, shoved away into a cupboard which stood half open, and contained besides, half-emptied decanters, and large pewters, and dog-collars, and packs of cards, and all sorts of miscellaneous articles to serve as an antidote.

Tom had scarcely finished his short survey when the door of the bedroom opened, and Drysdale emerged in a loose jacket lined with silk, his velvet cap on his head, and otherwise gorgeously attired. He was a pleasant-looking fellow of middle size, with dark hair, and a merry brown eye with a twinkle in it, which spoke well for his sense of humor; otherwise, his large features were rather plain, but he had the look and manners of a thoroughly well-bred gentleman.

His first act, after nodding to Tom, was to seize on a pewter and resort to the cask in the corner, from which he drew a pint or so of the contents, having, as he said, "'whoreson longing for that poor creature, small beer.' We were playing Van-John in Blake's rooms till three last night, and he gave us devilled bones and mulled port. A fellow can't enjoy his breakfast after that without something to cool his coppers."

Tom was as yet ignorant of what Van John might be, so held his peace, and took a pull at the beer which the other handed to him; and then the scout entered, and received orders to bring up Jack and the breakfast, and not wait for any one. In another minute, a bouncing and scratching was heard on the stairs, and a white bulldog rushed in, a gem in his way; for his brow was broad and massive, his skin was as fine as a lady's, and his tail taper and nearly as thin as a clay pipe. His general look, and a way he had of going 'snuzzling' about the calves of strangers, were not pleasant for nervous people. Tom, however, was used to dogs, and soon became friends with him, which evidently pleased his host. And then the breakfast arrived, all smoking, and with it the two other ingenious youths, in velvet caps and far more gorgeous apparel, so far as colors went, than Drysdale. They were introduced to Tom, who thought them somewhat ordinary and rather loud young gentlemen. One of them remonstrated vigorously against the presence of that confounded dog, and so Jack was sent to lie down in a corner, and then the four fell to work upon the breakfast.

It was a good lesson in gastronomy, but the results are scarcely worth repeating here. It is wonderful, though, how you feel drawn to a man who feeds you well; and, as Tom's appetite got less his liking and respect for his host undoubtedly increased.

When they had nearly finished, in walked the Honorable Piers, a tall slight man, two or three years older than the rest of them; good looking, and very well and quietly dressed, but with the drawing up of his nostril, and a drawing down of the corners of his mouth, which set Tom against him at once. The cool, supercilious half-nod, moreover, to which he treated our hero when introduced to him, was enough to spoil his digestion, and hurt his self-love a good deal more than he would have liked to own.

"Here, Henry," said the Honorable Piers to the scout in attendance, seating himself, and inspecting the half-cleared dishes; "what is there for my breakfast?"

Henry bustled about, and handed a dish or two.

"I don't want these cold things; haven't you kept me any gudgeon?"

"Why, sir," said Henry, "there was only two dozen this morning, and Mr. Drysdale told me to cook them all."

"To be sure I did," said Drysdale. "Just half a dozen for each of us four: they were first-rate. If you can't get here at half-past nine, you won't get gudgeon, I can tell you."

"Just go and get me a broil from the kitchen," said the Honorable Piers, without deigning an answer to Drysdale.

"Very sorry, sir; kitchen's shut by now, sir," answered Henry.

"Then go to Hinton's, and order some cutlets."

"I say, Henry," shouted Drysdale to the retreating scout; "not to my tick, mind! Put them down to Mr. St. Cloud."

Henry seemed to know very well that in that case he might save himself the trouble of the journey, and consequently returned to his waiting; and the Honorable Piers set to work upon his breakfast, without showing any further ill temper certainly, except by the stinging things which he threw every now and then into the conversation, for the benefit of each of the others in turn.

Tom thought he detected signs of coming hostilities between his host and St. Cloud, for Drysdale seemed to prick up his ears and get combative whenever the other spoke, and lost no chance in roughing him in his replies. And, indeed, he was not far wrong; the fact being, that during Drysdale's first term, the other had lived on him—drinking his wine, smoking his cigars, driving his dog-cart, and winning his money; all which Drysdale, who was the easiest going and best tempered fellow in Oxford, had stood with-

out turning a hair. But St. Cloud added to these little favors a half patronizing, half contemptuous manner, which he used with great success towards some of the other gentleman-commoners, who thought it a mark of high breeding, and the correct thing, but which Drysdale, who didn't care three straws about knowing St. Cloud, wasn't going to put up with.

However, nothing happened but a little sparring, and the breakfast things were cleared away, and the tankards left on the table, and the company betook themselves to cigars and easy chairs. Jack came out of his corner to be gratified with some of the remnants by his fond master, and then curled himself up on the sofa along which Drysdale lounged.

"What are you going to do to-day, Drysdale?" said one of the others. "I've ordered a leader to be sent on over the bridge, and mean to drive my dog-cart over, and dine at Abingdon. Won't you come?"

"Who's going besides?" asked Drysdale.

"Oh, only St. Cloud and Farley here. There's lots of room for a fourth."

"No, thank'ee; teaming's slow work on the back seat. Besides, I've half promised to go down in the boat."

"In the boat!" shouted the other. "Why, you don't mean to say you're going to take to pulling?"

"Well, I don't know; I rather think I am. I'm dog-tired of driving and doing the High Street, and playing cards and billiards all day, and our boat is likely to be head of the river, I think."

"By Jove! I should as soon have thought of you taking to reading, or going to University Sermon," put in St. Cloud.

"And the boating-men, too," went on Farley; "did you ever see such a set, St. Cloud? with their everlasting flannels and jerseys, and hair cropped like prize-fighters?"

"I'll bet a guinea there isn't one of them has more than 200*l.* a year," put in Chanter, whose father could just write his name, and was making a colossal fortune by supplying bad iron rails to the new railway companies.

"What the devil do I care," broke in Drysdale; "I know they're a deal more amusing than you fellows, who can't do anything that don't cost pounds."

'Getting economical!" sneered St. Cloud.

"Well, I don't see the fun of tearing one's heart out, and blistering one's hands, only to get abused by that little brute Miller the coxswain," said Farley.

"Why, you won't be able to sit straight in your chair for a month," said Chanter; "and the captain will make you dine at one, and fetch you out of anybody's rooms, confound his impudence whether he knows them or not, at eleven o'clock every night."

"Two cigars a day, and a pint and a half of liquid," and Farley inserted his cod fish face into the tankard; "fancy Drysdale on training allowance!"

Here a new comer entered in a bachelor's gown, who was warmly greeted by the name of Sanders by Drysdale. St. Cloud and he exchanged the coldest possible nods; and the other two, taking the office from their mentor, stared at him through their smoke, and, after a minute or two's silence, and a few rude half-whispered remarks amongst themselves, went off to play a game of pyramids till luncheon time. Sanders took a cigar which Drysdale offered, and began asking him about his friends at home, and what he had been doing in the vacation.

They were evidently intimate, though Tom thought that Drysdale didn't seem quite at his ease at first, which he wondered at, as Sanders took his fancy at once. However, eleven o'clock struck, and Tom had to go to lecture, where we cannot follow him just now, but must remain with Drysdale and Sanders, who chatted on very pleasantly for some twenty minutes, till a knock came at the door. It was not till the third summons that Drysdale shouted 'Come in,' with a shrug of his shoulders, and an impatient kick at the sofa-cushion at his feet, as though not half pleased at the approaching visit.

Reader! had you not ever a friend a few years older than yourself, whose good opinions you were anxious to keep? A fellow *teres atqua rotundus;* who could do everything better than you, from Plato and tennis down to singing a comic song and playing quoits? If you have had, wasn't he always in your rooms or company whenever anything happened to show your little weak points? Sanders, at any rate, occupied this position towards our young friend Drysdale, and the latter, much as he liked Sander's company, would have preferred it at any time than on an idle morning just at the beginning of term, when the gentlemen-tradesmen, who look upon undergraduates in general, and

gentlemen-commoners in particular, as their lawful prey, are in the habit of calling in flocks.

The new arrival was a tall florid man, with a half servile, half impudent, manner, and a foreign accent; dressed in sumptuous costume, with a velvet-faced coat, and a gorgeous plush waist-coat. Under his arm he carried a large parcel, which he proceeded to open, and placed upon a sofa the contents, consisting of a couple of coats, and three or four waist-coats and a pair of trousers. He saluted Sanders with a most obsequious bow, looked nervously at Jack, who opened one eye from between his master's legs and growled, and then, turning to Drysdale, asked if he should have the honor of seeing him try on any of the clothes?

"No; I can't be bored with trying them on now," said Drysdale; "leave them where they are."

Mr. Schloss would like very much on his return to town, in a day or two, to be able to assure his principals, that Mr. Drysdale's orders had been executed to his satisfaction. He had also some very beautiful new stuffs with him, which he should like to submit to Mr. Drysdale, and without more ado began unfolding cards of the most fabuluous plushes and cloths.

Drysdale glanced first at the cards and then at Sanders, who sat puffing his cigar, and watching Schloss's proceedings with a look not unlike Jack's when anyone he did not approve of approached his master.

"Confound your patterns, Schloss," said Drysdale; "I tell you I have more things than I want already."

"The large stripe, such as these, is now very much worn in London," went on Schloss, without heeding the rebuff, and spreading his cards on the table.

"D——trousers," replied Drysdale; "you seem to think a fellow has ten pair of legs."

"Monsieur is pleased to joke," smiled Schloss; "but, to be in the mode, gentlemen must have variety."

"Well, I won't order any now, that's flat," said Drysdale.

"Monsieur will do as he pleases; but it is impossible that he should not have some plush waists; the fabric is only just out, and is making a sensation."

"Now look here, Schloss; will you go if I order a waist-coat?"

"Monsieur is very good; he sees how tasteful these new patterns are,"

"I wouldn't be seen at a cock-fight in one of them; there're as gaudy as a salmon-fly," said Drysdale, feeling the stuff which the obsequious Schloss held out. "But it seems nice stuff, too," he went on; "I shouldn't mind having a couple of waistcoats of it of this pattern;" and he chucked across to Schloss a dark tartan waistcoat which was lying near him. "Have you got the stuff in that pattern?"

"Ah! no," said Schloss, gathering up the waistcoat; "but it shall not hinder. I shall have at once a loom for Monsieur set up in Paris."

"Set it up at Jericho if you like," said Drysdale; "and now go!"

"May I ask, Mr. Schloss," broke in Sanders, "what it will cost to set up the loom?"

"Ah! indeed, a trifle only; some twelve, or perhaps fourteen, pounds." Sanders gave a chuckle, and puffed away at his cigar.

"By Jove," shouted Drysdale, jerking himself in a sitting posture, and upsetting Jack, who went trotting about the room, and snuffing at Schloss's legs; "do you mean to say, Schloss, you were going to make me waistcoats at fourteen guineas apiece?"

"Not if Monsieur dissaproves. Ah! the large hound is not friendly to strangers; I will call again when Monsieur is more at leisure." And Schloss gathered up his cards and beat a hasty retreat, followed by Jack with his head on one side, and casting an enraged look at Sanders, as he slid through the door.

"Well done, Jack, old boy!" said Sanders, patting him; "what a funk the fellow was in. Well, you've saved your master a pony this fine morning. Cheap dog you've got, Drysdale."

"D—— the fellow," answered Drysdale, "he leaves a bad taste in one's month;" and he went to the table, took a pull at the tankard, and then threw himself down on the sofa again, and Jack jumped up and coiled himself round by his master's legs, keeping one half-open eye winking at him, and giving an occasional wag with the end of his taper tail.

Sanders got up, and began handling the new things. First he held up a pair of bright blue trousers, with a red stripe across them, Drysdale looking on from the sofa. "I

say, Drysdale, you don't mean to say you really ordered these thunder-and-lightening affairs?"

"Heaven only knows," said Drysdale; "I daresay I did. I'd order a full suit cut out of my grandmother's farthingale to get that cursed Schloss out of my rooms sometimes."

"You'll never be able to wear them; even in Oxford the boys would mob you. Why don't you kick him down stairs?" suggested Sanders, putting down the trousers, and turning to Drysdale.

"Well, I've been very near it once or twice; but I don't know—my name's Easy—besides, I don't want to give up the beast altogether; he makes the best trousers in England."

"And these waistcoats," went on Sanders; "let me see; three light silk waistcoats, peach-color, fawn-color, and lavender. Well, of course, you can only wear these at your weddings. You may be married the first time in the peach or fawn-color; and then, if you have luck, and bury your first wife soon, it will be a delicate compliment to take to No. 2 in the lavender, that being half-mourning; but still, you see, we're in difficulty as to one of the three, either the peach or the fawn color—"

Here he was interrupted by another knock, and a boy entered from the fashionable tobacconist's in Oriel Lane, who had general orders to let Drysdale have his fair share of anything very special in the cigar line. He deposited a two-pound box of cigars at three guineas the pound, on the table, and withdrew in silence.

Then came a boot-maker with a new pair of top-boots, which Drysdale had ordered in November, and had forgotten next day. The artist, wisely considering that his young patron must have plenty of tops to last him through the hunting season (he himself having supplied three previous pairs in October), had retained the present pair for show in his window; and every one knows that boots wear much better for being kept sometime before use. Now, however, as the hunting season was drawing to a close, and the place in the window was wanted for spring stock, he judiciously sent in the tops, merely adding half-a-sovereign or so to the price for interest on the out lay since the order. He also kindly left on the table a pair of large plated spurs to match the boots.

It never rains but it pours. Sanders sat smoking his cigar in provoking silence, while knock succeeded knock

and tradesman followed tradesman; each depositing some article ordered, or supposed to have been ordered, or which ought in the judgment of the depositors to have been ordered, by the luckless Drysdale: and new hats, and ties, and gloves, and pins, jostled balsam of Neroli, and registered shaving-soap, and fancy-letter-paper, and Eau de Cologne, on every available table. A visit from two livery-stable-keepers in succession followed, each of whom had several new leaders which they were anxious Mr. Drysdale should try as soon as possible. Drysdale growled and grunted, and wished them or Sanders at the bottom of the sea; however, he consoled himself with the thought that the worst was now passed,—there was no other possible supplier of undergraduate wants who could arrive.

Not so; in another minute a gentle knock came at the door. Jack pricked up his ears and wagged his tail; Drysdale recklessly shouted, "Come in!" the door slowly opened about eighteen inches, and a shock head of hair entered the room, from which one lively little gimlet eye went glancing about into every corner. The other eye was closed, but whether as a perpetual wink to indicate the unsleeping wariness of the owner, or because that hero had really lost the power of using it in some of his numerous encounters with men and beasts, no one, so far as I know, has ever ascertained.

"Ah! Mr. Drysdale, sir!" began the head; and then rapidly withdrew behind the door to avoid one of the spurs, which (being the missile nearest at hand) Drysdale instantly discharged at it. As the spur fell to the floor, the head reappeared in the room, and as quickly disappeared again, in deference to the other spur, the top boots, an ivory handled hair-brush, and a translation of Euripides, which in turn saluted each successive appearance of said head; and the grin was broader on each reappearance.

Then Drysdale, having no other article within reach which he could throw, burst into a loud fit of laughter, in which Sanders and the head heartily joined, and shouted, "Come in, Joe, you old fool! and don't stand bobbing your ugly old mug in and out there, like a jack in the box."

So the head came in, and after it the body, and closed the door behind it; and a queer, cross-grained, tough looking body it was, of about fifty years standing, or rather slouching, clothed in an old fustian coat, corduroy breeches and

gaiters, and being the earthly tabernacle of Joe Muggles, the dog-fancier of St. Aldate's.

"How the deuce did you get by the lodge, Joe?" inquired Drysdale. Joe, be it known, had been forbidden the college for importing a sack of rats into the inner quadrangle, upon the turf of which a match at rat-killing had come off between the terriers of two gentlemen-commoners. This little event might have passed unnoticed, but that Drysdale had bought from Joe a dozen of the slaughtered rats, and nailed them on the doors of the four college tutors, three to a door; whereupon inquiry had been made, and Joe had been outlawed.

"Oh, please Mr. Drysdale, sir, I just watched the 'ed porter, sir, across to the buttery to get his mornin', and then I tips a wink to the under porter (pal o' mine, sir, the under porter), and makes a run of it right up."

"Well, you'll be quod'ed if you're caught! Now what do you want?"

"Why, you see, Mr. Drysdale, sir," said Joe, in his most insinuating tone, "my mate hev got an old dog brock, sir, from the Heythrop kennel, and Honble Wernham, sir, of New Inn 'All, sir, he've jist been down our yard with a fighting chap from town, Mr. Drysdale—in the fancy, sir, he is, and hev got a matter of three dogs down, a stoppin at Milky Bill's. And he says, says he, Mr. Drysdale, as arra one of he's dogs'll draw the old un three times, while arra Oxford dog'll draw un twice, and Honble Wernham chaffs as how he'll back un for a fi' pun note;"—and Joe stopped to caress Jack, who was fawning on him as if he understood every word.

"Well, Joe, what then?" said Drysdale.

"So you see, Mr. Drysdale, sir," went on Joe, fondling Jack's muzzle, "my mate says, says he, 'Jack's the dog as can draw a brock,' says he, 'agin any Lonnun dog as ever was whelped; and Mr. Drysdale' says he, 'aint the man as'd see two poor chaps bounced out of their honest name by arra town chap, and a fi' pun note's no more to he, for the matter o' that, then to Honble Wernham his self,' says my mate."

"So I'm to lend you Jack for a match, and stand the stakes?"

"Well, Mr. Drysdale, sir, that was what my mate was a sayin'."

Drysdale's Room after a "Breakfast." Joe Muggins borrows Jack to "Draw a brock."

"You're cool hands, you and your mate," said Drysdale; 'here, take a drink, and get out, and I'll think about it." Drysdale was now in a defiant humor, and resolved not to let Sanders think that his presence could keep him from any act of folly to which he was inclined.

Joe took his drink; and just then several men came in from lecture, and drew off Drysdale's attention from Jack, who quietly followed Joe out of the room, when that worthy disappeared. Drysdale only laughed when he found it out, and went down to the yard that afternoon to see the match between the London dog and his own pet.

"How in the world are youngsters with unlimited credit, plenty of ready money, and fast tastes, to be kept from making fools and blackguards of themselves up here," thought Sanders, as he strolled back to his college. And it is a question which has exercised other heads besides his, and probably is a long way yet from being well solved.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ST. AMBROSE BOAT CLUB: ITS MINISTERY AND THEIR BUDGET.

We left our hero, a short time back, busily engaged on his dinner commons, and resolved forthwith to make great friends with Hardy. It never occurred to him that there could be the slightest difficulty in carrying out this resolve. After such a passage as they two had had together that afternoon, he felt that the usual outworks of acquaintanceship had been cleared at a bound, and looked upon Hardy already as an old friend to whom he could talk out his mind as freely as he had been used to do to his old tutor at school, or to Arthur. Moreover, as there were already several things in his head which he was anxious to ventilate, he was all the more pleased that chance had thrown him across a man of so much older standing than himself, and one to whom he instinctively felt that he could look up.

Accordingly, after grace had been said, and he saw that Hardy had not finished his dinner, but sat down again when the fellows had left the hall, he strolled out, meaning to wait for his victim outside, and seize upon him then and

there; so he stopped on the steps outside the hall-door, and to pass the time, joined himself to one or two other men with whom he had a speaking acquaintance, who were also hanging about. While they were talking, Hardy came out of the hall, and Tom turned and stepped forward, meaning to speak to him. To his utter discomfiture, Hardy walked quickly away, looking straight before him, and without showing, by look or gesture, that he was conscious of our hero's existence, or had ever seen him before in his life.

Tom was so taken aback that he made no effort to follow. He just glanced at his companions to see whether they had noticed the occurrence, and was glad to see that they had not (being deep in the discussion of the merits of a new hunter of Simmons's, which one of them had been riding); so he walked away by himself to consider what it could mean. But the more he puzzled about it, the less could he understand it. Surely, he thought, Hardy must have seen me; and yet, if he had, why did he not recognize me? My cap and gown can't be such a disguise as all that. And yet common decency must have led him to ask whether I was any the worse for my ducking, if he knew me.

He scouted the notion, which suggested itself once or twice, that Hardy meant to cut him; and so, not being able to come to any reasonable conclusion, suddenly bethought him that he was asked to a wine-party; and, putting his speculations aside for a moment, with the full intention nevertheless of clearing up the mystery as soon as possible; he betook himself to the rooms of his entertainer.

They were fair-sized rooms in the second quadrangle, furnished plainly but well, so far as Tom could judge; but, as they were now laid out for the wine-party, they had lost all individual character for the time. Every one of us, I suppose, is fond of studying the rooms, chambers, dens in short, of whatever sort they may be, of our friends and acquaintances—at least, I know that I myself like to see what sort of a chair a man sits in, where he puts it, what books lie or stand on the shelves nearest his hand, what the objects are which he keeps most familiarly before him, in that particular nook of the earth's surface in which he is most at home, where he pulls off his coat, collar, and boots, and gets into an old easy shooting-jacket, and his broadest slippers. Fine houses and fine rooms have little attraction for most men, and those who have the finest drawing rooms are probably the most bored by them; but the den of the

man you like, or are disposed to like, has the strongest and strangest attraction for you. However, an Oxford undergraduate's room, set out for a wine-party, can tell you nothing. All the characteristics are shoved away into the background, and there is nothing to be seen but a long mahogany set out with bottles, glasses, and dessert. In the present instance the preparations for festivity were pretty much what they ought to be: good sound port and sherry, biscuits, and a plate or two of nuts and dried fruits. The host, who sat at the head of the board, was one of the mainstays of the College boat-club. He was treasurer of the club, and also a kind of a boating nurse, who looked-up and trained the young oars, and in this capacity had been in command of the freshmen's four-oar, in which Tom had been learning his rudiments. He was a heavy, burly man, naturally awkward in his movements, but gifted with a sort of steady dogged enthusiasm, and by dint of hard and constant training had made himself into a most useful oar, fit for any place in the middle of the boat. In the two years of his residence he had pulled down to Sandford every day except Sundays, and much farther whenever he could get anybody to accompany him. He was the most good-natured man in the world, very badly dressed, very short-sighted, and called everybody "old fellow." His name was simple Smith, generally known as Diogenes Smith, from an eccentric habit which he had of making an easy chair of his hip bath. Malicious acquaintance declared that when Smith first came up, and, having paid the valuation for the furniture in his rooms, came to inspect the same, the tub in question had been left by chance in the sitting-room, and that Smith, not having the faintest idea of its proper use, had by the exercise of his natural reason come to the conclusion that it could only be meant for a man to sit in, and so had kept it in his sitting-room, and had taken to it as an arm-chair. This I have reason to believe was a libel. Certain it is, however, that in his first term he was discovered sitting solemnly in the tub, by his fire-side, with his spectacles on, playing the flute—the only other recreation besides boating in which he indulged; and no amount of quizzing could get him out of the habit. When alone, or with only one or two friends in his room, he still occupied the tub; and declared that it was the most perfect of seats hitherto invented, and, above all, adapted for the recreation of a boating man, to whom cushioned seats should be

an abomination. He was naturally a very hospitable man, and on this night was particularly anxious to make his rooms pleasant to all comers, as it was a sort of opening for the boating season. This wine of his was a business matter, in fact, to which Diogenes had invited officially, as treasurer of the boat-club, every man who had ever shown the least tendency to pulling,—many with whom he had scarcely a nodding acquaintance. For Miller, the coxswain, had come up at last. He had taken his B.A. degree in the Michaelmas term, and had been very near starting for a tour in the East. Upon turning the matter over in his mind, however, Miller had come to the conclusion that Palestine, and Egypt, and Greece could not run away, but that, unless he was there to keep matters going, the St. Ambrose boat would lose the best chance it was ever likely to have of getting to the head of the river. So he had patriotically resolved to reside till June, read divinity, and coach the racing crew; and had written to Diogenes to call together the whole boating interest of the College, that they might set to work at once in good earnest. Tom, and the three or four other freshmen present, were duly presented to Miller as they came in, who looked them over as the colonel of a crack regiment might look over horses at Horncastle-fair, with a single eye to their bone and muscle, and how much work might be got out of them. They then gathered towards the lower end of the long table, and surveyed the celebrities at the upper end with much respect. Miller, the coxswain, sat on the host's right hand,—a slight, resolute, fiery little man, with curly black hair. He was peculiarly qualified by nature for the task which he had set himself; and it takes no mean qualities to keep a boat's crew well together and in order. Perhaps he erred a little on the side of over-strictness and severity; and he certainly would have been more popular had his manners been a thought more courteous; but the men who rebelled most against his tyranny grumblingly confessed that he was a first rate coxswain.

A very different man was the captain of the boat, who sat opposite to Miller; altogether, a noble specimen of a very noble type of our countrymen. Tall and strong of body; courageous and even-tempered; tolerant of all men; sparing of speech, but ready in action; a thoroughly well-balanced, modest, quiet Englishman; one of those who do a good stroke of the work of the country without getting

much credit for it, or even becoming aware of the fact; for the last thing such men understand is how to blow their own trumpets. He was perhaps too easy for the captain of St. Ambrose boat-club; at any rate, Miller was always telling him so. But, if he was not strict enough with others, he never spared himself, and was as good as three men in the boat at a pinch.

But if I venture on more introductions, my readers will get bewildered; so I must close the list, much as I should like to make them known to "fortis Gyas fortisque Cloanthus," who sat round the chiefs, laughing and consulting, and speculating on the chances of the coming races. No; stay, there is one other man they must make room for. Here he comes, rather late, in a very glossy hat, the only man in the room not in cap and gown. He walks up and takes his place by the side of the host as a matter of course; a handsome, pale man, with a dark, quick eye, conscious that he draws attention wherever he goes, and apparently of the opinion that it is his right.

"Who is that who has just come in in beaver?" said Tom, touching the next man to him.

"Oh, don't you know? that's Blake; he's the most wonderful fellow in Oxford," answered his neighbor.

"How do you mean?" said Tom.

"Why, he can do everything better than almost anybody, and without any trouble at all. Miller was obliged to have him in the boat last year, though he never trained a bit. Then he's in the eleven, and is a wonderful rider, and tennisplayer, and shot."

"Ay, and he's so awfully clever with it all," joined in the man on the other side. "He'll be a safe first, though I don't believe he reads more than you or I. He can write songs, too, as fast as you can talk nearly, and sings them wonderfully."

"Is he of our College, then?"

"Yes, of course, or he couldn't have been in our boat last year."

"But I don't think I ever saw him in chapel or hall."

"No, I daresay not. He hardly ever goes to either, and yet he manages never to get hauled up much, no one knows how. He never gets up now till the afternoon, and sits up nearly all night playing cards with the fastest fellows, or going round singing glees at three or four in the morning."

Tom sipped his port and looked with great interest at the admirable Crichton of St. Ambrose's; and, after watching him a few moments said in a low voice to his neighbor,—

"How wretched he looks! I never saw a sadder face."

Poor Blake! one can't help calling him "poor," although he himself would have winced at it more than any name you could have called him. You might have admired, feared, or wondered at him, and he would have been pleased; the object of his life was to raise such feelings in his neighbors; but pity was the last which he would like to excite.

He was indeed a wonderfully gifted fellow, full of all sorts of energy and talent, and power and tenderness; and yet, as his face told only too truly to any one who watched him when he was exerting himself in society, one of the most wretched men in the College. He had a passion for success—for beating everybody else in whatever he took in hand, and that, too, without seeming to make any great effort himself. The doing a thing well and thoroughly gave him no satisfaction unless he could feel that he was doing it better and more easily than A, B, or C, and they felt and acknowledged this. He had had full swing of success for two years, and now the Nemesis was coming.

For, although not an extravagant man, many of the pursuits in which he has eclipsed all rivals were far beyond the means of any but a rich one, and Blake was not rich. He had a fair allowance, but by the end of his first year was considerably in debt, and, at the time we are speaking of, the whole pack of Oxford tradesmen into whose books he had got (having smelt out the leaness of his expectations), were upon him, besieging him for payment. This miserable and constant annoyance was wearing his soul out. This was the reason why his oak was sported, and he was never seen till the afternoons, and turned night into day. He was too proud to come to an understanding with his persecutors, even had it been possible; and now, at his sorest need, his whole scheme of life was failing him; his love of success was turning into ashes in his mouth; he felt much more disgust than pleasure at his triumphs over other men, and yet the habit of striving for successes, notwithstanding its irksomeness, was too strong to be resisted.

Poor Blake! he was living on from hand to mouth, flashing out in his old brilliancy and power, and forcing himself to take the lead in whatever company he might be; but

utterly lonely and depressed when by himself—reading feverishly in secret, in a desperate effort to retrieve all by high honors and a fellowship. As Tom said to his neighbor, there was no sadder face than his to be seen in Oxford.

And yet at this very wine party he was the life of everything, as he sat up there between Diogenes—whom he kept in a constant sort of mild epileptic fit, from laughter, and wine going the wrong way (for whenever Diogenes raised his glass Blake shot him with some joke)—and the Captain who watched him with the most undisguised admiration. A singular contrast, the two men! Miller, though Blake was the torment of his life, relaxed after the first quarter of an hour; and our hero, by the same time, gave himself credit for being a much greater ass than he was, for having ever thought Blake's face a sad one.

When the room was quite full, and enough wine had been drunk to open the hearts of the guests, Diogenes rose on a signal from Miller, and opened the budget. The financial statement was a satisfactory one; the club was almost free of debt; and, comparing their position with that of other colleges, Diogenes advised that they might fairly burden themselves a little more, and then, if they would stand a whip of ten shillings a man, they might have a new boat, which he believed they all would agree had become necessary. Miller supported the new boat in a pungent little speech; and the Captain, when appealed to, nodded and said he thought they must have one. So the small supplies and the large addition to the club debt was voted unanimously, and the Captain, Miller, and Blake, who had many notions as to the flooring, lines, and keel of a racing boat, were appointed to order and superintend the building.

Soon afterwards, coffee came in and cigars were lighted; a large section of the party went off to play pool, others to stroll about the streets, others to whist; a few, let us hope, to their own rooms to read; but these latter were a sadly small minority even in the quietest of St. Ambrose parties.

Tom, who was fascinated by the heroes at the head of the table, sat steadily on, sidling up towards them as the intermediate places became vacant, and at last attained the next chair but one to the Captain, where for the time he sat in perfect bliss. Blake and Miller were telling boating stories of the Henley and Thames regattas, the latter of which had been lately started with great *éclat;* and from these great

yearly events, and the deeds of prowess done thereat, the talk came gradually round to the next races.

"Now, Captain," said Miller, suddenly, "have you thought yet what new men we are to try in the crew this year?"

"No, 'pon my honor I haven't," said the Captain, "I'm reading, and have no time to spare. Besides, after all, there's lots of time to think about it. Here we're only half through Lent term, and the races don't begin till the end of Easter term."

"It won't do," said Miller, "we *must* get the crew together this term."

"Well, you and Smith put your heads together and manage it," said the Captain. "I will go down any day, and as often as you like, at two o'clock."

"Let's see," said Miller to Smith, "how many of the old crew have we left?"

"Five, counting Blake," answered Diogenes.

"Counting me! well, that's cool," laughed Blake; "you old tub haunting flute-player, why am I not to be counted?"

"You never will train, you see," said Diogenes.

"Smith is quite right," said Miller; "there's no counting on you, Blake. Now, be a good fellow, and promise to be regular this year."

"I'll promise to do my work in a race, which is more than some of your best-trained men will do," said Blake, rather piqued.

"Well you know what I think on the subject," said Miller; "but who have we got for the other three places?"

"There's Drysdale would do," said Diogenes; "I hear he was a capital oar at Eton; and so, though I don't know him, I managed to get him once down last term. He would do famously for No. 2, or No. 3 if he would pull."

"Do you think he will, Blake? You know him, I suppose," said Miller.

"Yes, I know him well enough," said Blake; and, shrugging his shoulders, added, "I dont think you'll get him to train much."

"Well, we must try," said Miller. "Now, who else is there?"

Smith went through four or five names, at each of which Miller shook his head.

"Any promising freshmen?" said he at last.

"None better than Brown here," said Smith; "I think he'll do well, if he will only work, and stand being coached."

"Have you ever pulled much?" said Miller.

"No," said Tom, "never till this last month—since I've been up here."

"All the better," said Miller; "now, Captain, you hear; we may probably have to go in with three new hands; they must get into your stroke this term, or we shall be nowhere."

"Very well," said the Captain; "I'll give from two till five any days you like."

"And now let's go and have one pool," said Blake, getting up. "Come, Captain, just one little pool after all this business."

Diogenes insisted on staying to play his flute; Miller was engaged; but the Captain, with a little coaxing, was led away by Blake, and good-naturedly asked Tom to accompany them, when he saw that he was looking as if he would like it. So the three went off to the billiard-rooms; Tom in such spirits at the chance of being tried in the crew, that he hardly noticed the exceedingly bad exchange which he had involutarily made of his new cap and gown for a third-year cap with the board broken into several pieces, and a fusty old gown which had been about college probably for ten generations. Under-graduate morality in the matter of caps and gowns seems to be founded on the celebrated maxim, "Propriété c'est le vol."

They found the St. Ambrose pool-room full of the fast set; and Tom enjoyed his game much, though his three lives were soon disposed of. The Captain and Blake were the last lives on the board, and divided the pool at Blake's suggestion. He had scarcely nerve for playing out a single-handed match with such an iron-nerved, steady piece of humanity as the Captain, though he was the more brilliant player of the two. The party then broke up, and Tom returned to his rooms; and, when he was by himself again, his thoughts recurred to Hardy. How odd, he thought, that they never mentioned him for the boat! Could he have done anything to be ashamed of? How was it that nobody seemed to know him, and he to know nobody.

Most readers, I doubt not, will think our hero very green for being puzzled at so simple a matter; and, no doubt, the steps in the social scale in England are very clearly marked out, and we all come to the appreciation of the gradations

sooner or later. But our hero's previous education must be taken into consideration. He had not been instructed at home to worship mere conventional distinctions of rank or wealth, and had gone to a school which was not frequented by persons of rank, and where no one knew whether a boy was heir to a principality, or would have to fight his own way in the world. So he was rather taken by surprise at what he found to be the state of things at St. Ambrose's and didn't easily realize it.

CHAPTER V.

HARDY, THE SERVITOR.

It was not long before Tom had effected his object in part. That is to say, he had caught Hardy several times in the Quadrangle coming out of Lecture Hall, or Chapel, and had fastened himself upon him; often walking with him even up to the door of his rooms. But there matters ended. Hardy was very civil and gentlemanly; he even seemed pleased with the volunteered companionship; but there was undoubtedly a coolness about him which Tom could not make out. But, as he only liked Hardy more, the more he saw of him, he very soon made up his mind to break ground himself, and to make a dash at any rate for something more than a mere speaking acquaintance.

One evening he had as usual walked from Hall with Hardy up to his door. They stopped a moment talking, and then Hardy, half-opening the door, said, "Well, good-night; perhaps we shall meet on the river to-morrow," and was going in, when Tom, looking him in the face, blurted out, "I say, Hardy, I wish you'd let me come in and sit with you a bit."

"I never ask a man of our college into my rooms," answered the other, "but come in by all means if you like;" and so they entered.

The room was the worst, both in situation and furniture, which Tom had yet seen. It was on the ground floor, with only one window, which looked out into a back yard, where were the offices of the college. All day, and up to nine o'clock at night, the yard and offices were filled with scouts; boys cleaning boots and knives; bed-makers emptying slops and tattling scandal; scullions peeling potatoes

and listening; and the butchers' and green-grocers' men who supply the college, and loitering about to gossip and get a taste of the college ale before going about their business. The room was large, but low and close, and the floor uneven. The furniture did not add to the cheerfulness of the apartment. It consisted of one large table in the middle, covered with an old chequered table-cloth, and an Oxford table near the window, on which lay half-a-dozen books with writing materials. A couple of plain Windsor chairs occupied the two sides of the fireplace, and half-a-dozen common wooden chairs stood against the opposite wall, three on each side of a pretty-well-filled book-case; while an old rickety sofa, covered with soiled chintz, leaned against the wall which fronted the window, as if to rest its lame leg. The carpet and rug were dingy, and decidedly the worse for wear; and the college had evidently neglected to paper the room or whitewash the ceiling for several generations. On the mantle-piece reposed a few long clay pipes, and a brown earthenware receptacle for tobacco, together with a japanned tin case, shaped like a figure of eight, the use of which puzzled Tom exceedingly. One modestly-framed drawing of a 10-gun brig hunt above, and at the side of the fireplace a sword and belt. All this Tom had time to remark by the light of the fire, which was burning brightly, while his host produced a couple of brass candlesticks from his cupboard and lighted up, and drew the curtain before his window. Then Tom instinctively left off taking his notes, for fear of hurting the other's feelings (just as he would have gone on doing, and making remarks on everything, had the rooms been models of taste and comfort), and throwing his cap and gown on the sofa, sat down on one of the Windsor chairs.

"What a jolly chair," said he; "where do you get them? I should like to buy one."

"Yes, they're comfortable enough," said Hardy, "but the reason I have them is, that they're the cheapest arm-chair one can get. I like an arm-chair, and can't afford to have any other than these."

Tom dropped the subject of the chairs at once, following his instinct again, which, sad to say, was already teaching him that poverty is a disgrace to a Briton, and that, until you know a man thoroughly, you must always seem to assume that he is the owner of unlimited ready money. Somehow or another, he began to feel embarrassed, and couldn't

think of anything to say, as his host took down the pipes and tobacco from the mantle-piece, and placed them on the table. However, anything was better than silence; so he began again.

"Very good-sized rooms yours seem," said he, taking up a pipe mechanically.

"Big enough, for the matter of that," answered the other, "but very dark and noisy in the day-time."

"So I should think," said Tom; "do you know, I'd sooner, now, have my freshman's rooms up in the garrets. I wonder you don't change."

"I get these for nothing," said his host, putting his long clay to the candle, and puffing out volumes of smoke. Tom felt more and more unequal to the situation, and filled his pipe in silence. The first whiff made him cough, as he wasn't used to the fragrant weed in this shape.

"I'm afraid you don't smoke tobacco," said his host from behind his own cloud; "shall I go out and fetch you a cigar? I don't smoke them myself; I can't afford it."

"No, thank you," said Tom blushing for shame, as if he had come there only to insult his host, and wishing himself heartily out of it, "I've got my case here; and the fact is, I will smoke a cigar if you'll allow me, for I'm not up to pipes yet. I wish you'd take some," he went on, emptying his cigars on to the table.

"Thank'ee," replied his host, "I prefer a pipe. And now what will you have to drink? I don't keep wine, but I can get a bottle of anything you like from the common room. That's one of *our* priveliges,"—he gave a grim chuckle as he emphasised the word "our."

"Who on earth are *we?*" thought Tom; "servitors, I suppose," for he knew already that undergraduates in general could not get wine from the college cellars.

"I don't care a straw about wine," said he, feeling very hot about the ears; "a glass of beer, or anything you have here—or tea."

"Well, I can give you a pretty good glass of whiskey," said his host, going to the cupboard, and producing a black bottle, two tumblers of different sizes, some little wooden toddy ladles, and sugar in an old cracked glass.

Tom vowed that, if there was one thing in the world he liked more than another, it was whiskey; and began measuring out the liquor carefully into his tumbler, and rolling it round between his eyes and the candle and

smelling it, to show what a treat it was to him; while his host put the kettle on the fire, to ascertain that it had quit boiling, and then, as it spluttered and fizzed, filled up the two tumblers, and restored it to its place on the hob.

Tom swallowed some of the mixture, which nearly made him cough again—for, though it was very good, it was also very potent. However, by an effort he managed to swallow his cough; he would about as soon have lost a little finger as let it out. Then, to his great relief, his host took the pipe from his lips, and inquired, "How do you like Oxford?"

"I hardly know yet," said Tom; "the first few days I was delighted with going about and seeing the buildings, and finding out who had lived in each of the old colleges, and pottering about in the Bodleian, and fancying I should like to be a great scholar. Then I met several old school fellows going about, who are up at other colleges, and went to their rooms and talked over old times. But none of my very intimate friends are up yet, and unless you care very much about a man already, you don't seem likely to get intimate with him up here, unless he is at your own college."

He paused, as if expecting an answer.

"I daresay not," said Hardy, "but I never was at a public school, unluckily, and so am no judge."

"Well, then, as to the college life," went on Tom, "it's all very well as far as it goes. There's plenty of liberty and good food. And the men seem nice fellows—many of them, at least, so far as I can judge. But I can't say that I like it as much as I liked our school life."

"I don't understand," said Hardy. "Why not?"

"Oh! I hardly know," said Tom laughing; "I don't seem as if I had anything to do here; that's one reason, I think. And then, you see, at Rugby I was rather a great man. There one had a share in the ruling of 300 boys, and a good deal of responsibility; but here one has only just to take care of oneself, and keep out of scrapes; and that's what I never could do. What do you think a fellow ought to do, now, up here?"

"Oh, I don't see much difficulty in that," said his host, smiling; "get up your lectures well, to begin with."

"But my lectures are a farce," said Tom; "I've done all the books over and over again. They don't take me an hour a day to get up."

"Well, then, set to work reading something regularly—reading for your degree, for instance."

"Oh, hang it! I can't look so far forward as that; I sha'n't be going up for three years."

"You can't begin too early. You might go and talk to your college-tutor about it."

"So I did," said Tom; "at least I meant to do it. For he asked me and two other freshmen to breakfast the other morning, and I was going to open out to him; but when I got there I was quite shut up. He never looked one of us in the face, and talked in set sentences, and was cold, and formal, and condescending. The only bit of advice he gave us was to have nothing to do with boating—just the one thing which I feel a real interest in. I couldn't get out a word of what I wanted to say."

"It is unlucky, certainly, that our present tutors take so little interest in anything which the men care about. But it is more from shyness than anything else, that manner which you noticed. You may be sure that he was more wretched and embarrassed than any of you."

"Well, but now I should really like to know what you did yourself," said Tom; "you are the only man of much older standing than myself whom I know at all yet—I mean I don't know anybody else well enough to talk about this sort of thing to them. What did you do, now, besides learning to pull, in your first year?"

"I had learnt to pull before I came up here," said Hardy. "I really hardly remember what I did besides read. You see, I came up with a definite purpose of reading. My father was very anxious that I should become a good scholar. Then my position in the college and my poverty naturally kept me out of the many things which other men do."

Tom flushed again at the ugly word, but not so much as at first. Hardy couldn't mind the subject, or he would never be forcing it up at every turn, he thought.

"You wouldn't think it," he began again, harping on the same string, "but I can hardly tell you how I miss the sort of responsibility I was talking to you about. I have no doubt I shall get the vacuum filled up before long, but for the life of me I can't see how yet."

"You will be a very lucky fellow if you don't find it quite as much as you can do to keep yourself in order up here. It is about the toughest part of a man's life, I do believe, the time he has spent here. My university life has

been so different altogether from what yours will be, that my experience isn't likely to benefit you."

"I wish you would try me, though," said Tom; "you don't know what a teachable sort of a fellow I am, if anybody will take me the right way. You taught me to scull, you know; or at least put me in a way to learn. But sculling, and rowing, and cricket, and all the rest of it, with such reading as I am likely to do, won't be enough. I feel sure of that already."

"I don't think it will," said Hardy. "No amount of physicial or mental work will fill the vacuum you were talking of just now. It is the empty house swept and garnished, which the boy might have had glimpses of, but the man finds yawning within him, and which must be filled somehow. It's a pretty good three years' work to learn how to keep the devils out of it, more or less, by the time you take your degree. At least I have found it so."

Hardy rose and took a turn or two up and down his room. He was astonished at finding himself talking so unreservedly to one of whom he knew so little, and half-wished the words recalled. He lived much alone, and thought himself morbid and too self-conscious; why should he be filling a youngster's head with puzzles? How did he know that they were thinking of the same thing?

But the spoken word cannot be recalled; it must go on its way for good or evil; and this one set the hearer staring into the ashes, and putting many things together in his head.

It was some minutes before he broke silence, but at last he gathered up his thoughts, and said, "Well, I hope I sha'n't shirk when the time comes. You don't think a fellow need shut himself up, though? I'm sure I shouldn't be any the better for that."

"No I don't think you would," said Hardy.

"Because, you see," Tom went on, waxing bolder and more confidential, "If I were to take to moping by myself, I shouldn't read as you or any sensible fellow would do; I know that well enough. I should just begin, sitting with my legs upon the mantel-piece, and looking into my own inside. I see you are laughing, but you know what I mean, don't you, now?"

"Yes; staring into the vacuum you were talking of just now; it all comes back to that," said Hardy.

"Well, perhaps it does," said Tom; "and I don't believe it does a fellow a bit of good to be thinking about himself and his own doings."

"Only he can't help himself," said Hardy. "Let him throw himself as he will into all that is going on up here, after all he must be alone for a great part of his time—all night at any rate—and when he gets his oak sported, it's all up with him. He must be looking more or less into his own inside, as you call it."

"Then I hope he won't find it as ugly a business as I do. If he does, I'm sure he can't be worse employed."

"I don't know that," said Hardy; "he can't learn anything worth learning in any other way."

"Oh, I like that!" said Tom; "it's worth learning how to play tennis, and how to speak the truth. You can't learn either by thinking of yourself ever so much."

"You must know the truth before you can speak it," said Hardy.

"So you always do in plenty of time."

"How?" said Hardy.

"Oh, I don't know," said Tom; "by a sort of instinct, I suppose. I never in my life felt any doubt about what I *ought* to say or do; did you?"

"Well, yours is a good, comfortable, working belief, at any rate," said Hardy, smiling; "and I should advise you to hold on to it as long as you can."

"But you don't think I can very long, eh?"

"No: but men are very different. There's no saying. If you were going to get out of the self-dissecting business altogether though, why should you have brought the subject up at all to-night? It looks awkward for you, doesn't it?"

Tom began to feel rather forlorn at this suggestion, and probably betrayed it in his face, for Hardy changed the subject suddenly.

"How do you get on in the boat? I saw you going down to-day, and thought the time much better."

Tom felt greatly relieved, as he was beginning to find himself in rather deep water; so he rushed into boating with great zest, and the two chatted on very pleasantly on that and other matters.

The college clock struck during a pause in their talk, and Tom looked at his watch.

"Eight o'clock, I declare," he said; "why I must have been here more than two hours. I'm afraid, now, you have been wanting to work, and I have kept you from it with my talk."

"No, it's Saturday night. Besides, I don't get much society that I care about, and so I enjoy it all the more. Won't you stop and have some tea?"

Tom gladly consented, and his host produced a somewhat dilapidated set of crockery, and proceeded to brew the drink least appreciated at St. Ambrose's. Tom watched him in silence, much excercised in his mind as to what manner of man he had fallen upon; very much astonished at himself for having opened out so freely, and feeling a desire to know more about Hardy, not unmixed with a sort of nervousness as to how he was to accomplish it.

When Hardy sat down again and began pouring out the tea, curiosity overcame, and he opened with—

"So you read most nights, after Hall?"

"Yes, for two or three hours; longer, when I am in a good humor."

"What, all by yourself?"

"Generally; but once or twice a week Grey comes in to compare notes. Do you know him?"

"No; at least he hasn't called on me, I have just spoken to him."

"He is a quiet fellow, and I daresay doesn't call on any man unless he knew something of him before."

"Don't you?"

"Never," said Hardy, shortly; and added after a short pause, "very few men would thank me if I did; most would think it impertinent, and I'm too proud to risk that."

Tom was on the point of asking why; but the uncomfortable feeling which he had nearly lost came back on him.

"I suppose one very soon gets tired of the wine and supper-party life, though I own I find it pleasant enough now."

"I have never been tired," said Hardy; "servitors are not troubled with that sort of a thing. If they were I wouldn't go unless I could return them, and that I can't afford."

"There he goes again," thought Tom; "why will he be throwing that old story in my face over and over again? he can't think I care about his poverty; I won't change the subject this time, at any rate." And so he said:

"You don't mean to say it makes any real difference to a man in society up here, whether he is poor or rich; I mean, of course, if he is a gentleman and a good fellow?"

"Yes, it does—the very greatest possible. But don't take my word for it. Keep your eyes open and judge for yourself; I daresay I'm prejudiced on the subject."

"Well, I shan't believe it if I can help it," said Tom; "you know you said just now that you never called on any one. Perhaps you don't give men a fair chance. They might be glad to know you if you would let them, and may think it's your fault that they don't."

"Very possible," said Hardy; "I tell you not to take my word for it."

"It upsets all one's ideas so," went on Tom; "why Oxford ought to be *the* place in England where money should count for nothing. Surely, now, such a man as Jervis, our captain, has more influence than all the rich men in the college put together, and is more looked up to?"

"He's one of a thousand," said Hardy; "handsome, strong, good-tempered, clever, and up to everything. Besides, he isn't a poor man; and mind, I don't say that if he were he wouldn't be where he is. I am speaking of the rule, and not of the exceptions."

Here Hardy's scout came in to say that the Dean wanted to speak to him. So he put on his cap and gown, and Tom rose also.

"Well, I'm sorry to turn you out," said Hardy; "and I'm afraid I've been very surly and made you very uncomfortable. You won't come back again in a hurry."

"Indeed I will though, if you will let me," said Tom; "I have enjoyed my evening immensely."

"Then come whenever you like," said Hardy.

"But I am afraid of interfering with your reading," said Tom.

"Oh, you needn't mind that, I have plenty of time on my hands; besides, one can't read all night, and from eight till ten you'll find me generally idle."

"Then you'll see me often enough. But promise, now, to turn me out whenever I am in the way."

"Very well," said Hardy, laughing; and so they parted for the time.

Some twenty minutes afterwards Hardy returned to his room after his interview with the Dean, who merely wanted to speak to him about some matter of college business

He flung his cap and gown on the sofa, and began to walk up an down his room, at first hurriedly, but soon with his usual regular tramp. However expressive a man's face may be, and however well you may know it, it is simply nonsense to say that you can tell what he is thinking about by looking at it, as many of us are apt to boast. Still more absurd would it be to expect readers to know what Hardy is thinking about, when they have never had the advantage of seeing his face even in a photograph. Wherefore, it would seem that the author is bound on such occasions to put his readers on equal vantage-ground with himself, and not only to tell what a man does, but, so far as may be, what he is thinking about also.

His first thought, then, was one of pleasure at having been sought by one who seemed to be just the sort of friend he would like to have. He contrasted our hero with the few men with whom he had generally lived, and for some of whom he had a high esteem—whose only idea of exercise was a two hours' constitutional walk in the afternoons, and whose life was chiefly spent over books and behind sported oaks—and felt that this was more of a man after his own heart. Then came doubts whether his new friend would draw back when he had been up a little longer, and knew more of the place. At any rate he had said and done nothing to tempt him; "if he pushes the acquaintance —and I think he will—it will be because he likes me for myself. And I can do him good too, I feel sure," he went on, as he ran over rapidly his own life for the last three years. "Perhaps he won't flounder into all the sloughs that I have had to drag through; he will get too much of the healthy, active life up here for that, which I have never had; but some of them he must get into. All the companionship of boating and cricketing, and wine-parties, and supper parties, and all the reading in the world won't keep him from many a long hour of mawkishness, and discontent, and emptyness of heart; he feels that already himself. Am I sure of that, though? I may be only reading myself into him. At any rate, why should I have helped to trouble him before the time? Was that a friend's part? Well, he *must* face it, and the sooner the better perhaps. At any rate it is done. But what a blessed thing if one can only help a younger like this to fight his own way through the cold clammy atmosphere which is always hanging over him, and ready to settle down on him—can help to keep some living faith in

him, that the world, Oxford and all, isn't a respectable piece of machinery set going some centuries back! Ah! it's an awful business, that temptation to believe, or think you believe, in a dead God. It has nearly broken my back a score of times. What are all the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil to this? It includes them all. Well, I believe I can help him, and, please God, I will, if he will only let me; and the very sight of him does me good; so I won't believe we went down the lasher together for nothing."

And so at last Hardy finished his walk, took down a volume of Don Quixote from his shelves, and sat down for an hour's enjoyment before turning in.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW DRYSDALE AND BLAKE WENT FISHING.

"DRYSDALE, what's a servitor?"

"How the deuce should I know?"

This short and pithy dialogue took place in Drysdale's rooms one evening soon after the conversation recorded in the last chapter. He and Tom were sitting alone there, for a wonder, and so the latter seized the occasion to propound this question, which he had had on his mind for some time. He was scarcely satisfied with the above rejoinder, but while he was thinking how to come at the subject by another road, Drysdale opened a morocco fly-book, and poured its contents on the table, which was already covered with flies of all sorts and patterns, hanks of gut, delicate made-up casts, reels, minnows, and tackle enough to kill all the fish in the four neighboring counties. Tom began turning them over and scrutinizing the dressings of the flies.

"It has been so mild, the fish must be in season, don't you think? Besides, if they're not, it's a jolly drive to Fairford at any rate. You've never been behind my team Brown. You'd better come, now, to-morrow."

"I can't cut my two lectures."

"Bother your lectures! Put on an æger, then."

"No! that doesn't suit my book, you know."

"I can't see why you should be so cursedly particular. Well, if you won't, you won't; I know that well enough. But what cast shall you fish with to-morrow?"

"How many flies do you use?"

"Sometimes two, sometimes three."

"Two's enough, I think; all depends on the weather; but, if it's at all like to-day, you can't do better, I should think, than the old March brown and a palmer to begin with. Then, for change, this hare's ear, and an alder fly, perhaps; or,—let me see," and he began searching the glittering heap to select a color to go with the dull hare's ear.

"Isn't it early for the alder?" said Drysdale.

"Rather, perhaps; but they can't resist it."

"These bang-tailed little sinners any good?" said Drysdale, throwing some cock-a-bondies across the table.

"Yes; I never like to be without them, and a governor or two. Here, this is a well-tied lot," said Tom, picking out half a-dozen. "You never know when you may not kill with either of them. But I don't know the Fairford water; so my opinion isn't worth much."

Tom soon returned to the old topic.

"But now, Drysdale, you must know what a servitor is?"

"Why should I? Do you mean one of our college servitors?"

"Yes?"

"Oh, something in the upper-servant line. I should put him above the porter, and below the cook and butler. He does the don's dirty work, and gets their broken vituals, and I believe he pays no college fees."

Tom rather drew into himself at this insolent and offhand definition. He was astonished and hurt at the tone of his friend. However, presently, he resolved to go through with it, and began again.

"But servitors are gentlemen, I suppose?"

"A good deal of the cock-tail about them, I should think. But I have not the honor of any acquaintance amongst them."

"At any rate, they are undergraduates, are not they?"

"Yes."

"And may take degrees, just like you or me?"

"They may have all the degrees to themselves, for anything I care. I wish they would let one pay a servitor for passing little-go for one. It would be deuced comfortable. I wonder it don't strike the dons, now; they might get clever beggars for sevitors, and farm them, and so make loads of tin."

"But, Drysdale, seriously, why should you talk like that? If they can take all the degrees we can, and are, in fact, just what we are, undergraduates, I can't see why they're not as likely to be gentlemen as we. It can surely make no difference, their being poor men?"

"It must make them devilish uncomfortable," said the incorrigible payer of double fees, getting up to light his cigar.

"The name ought to carry respect here, at any rate. The Black Prince was an Oxford man, and he thought the noblest motto he could take was, 'Ich dien,' I serve."

"If he were here now, he would change it for 'Je paye.'"

"I often wish you would tell me what you really and truly think Drysdale."

"My dear fellow I am telling you what I do really think. Whatever the Black Prince might be pleased to observe if he were here, I stick to my motto. I tell you the thing to be able to do here at Oxford is—to pay."

"I don't believe it."

"I knew you wouldn't."

"I don't believe you do either."

"I do, though. But what makes you so curious about servitors?"

"Why, I made friends with Hardy, one of our servitors. He is such a fine fellow!"

I am sorry to relate that it cost Tom an effort to say this to Drysdale, but he despised himself that it was so.

"You should have told me so before you began to pump me," said Drysdale. "However, I partly suspected something of the sort. You've a good bit of a Quixote in you. But really, Brown," he added, seeing Tom redden and look angry, "I'm sorry if what I said pained you. I daresay this friend of yours is a gentleman, and all you say."

"He is more of a gentleman by a long way than most of the—"

"'Gentlemen commoners,' you were going to say. Don't crane at such a small fence on my account. I will put it in

another way for you. He can't be a greater snob than many of them."

"Well, but why do you live with them so much, then?"

"Why? Because they happen to do the things I like doing, and live up here as I like to live. I like hunting and driving, and drawing badgers, and playing cards, and good wines and cigars. They hunt and drive, and keep dogs and good cellars, and will pay unlimited loo or Van John as long as I please."

"But I know you get very sick of all that often, for I've heard you say as much half-a-dozen times in the little time I've been here."

"Why, you don't want to deny me the Briton's privilege of grumbling, do you?" said Drysdale, as he flung his legs up on the sofa, crossing one over the other as he lounged on his back—his favorite attitude; "but suppose I am getting tired of it all—which I am not—what do you purpose as a substitue?"

"Take to boating. I know you could be in the first boat if you liked; I heard them say so at Smith's wine the other night."

"But what's to prevent my getting just as tired of that? Besides, it's such a grind. And then there's the bore of changing all one's habits."

"Yes, but it's such splendid hard work," said Tom, who was bent on making a convert of his friend.

"Just so; and that's just what I don't want; the 'books and work, and healthful play' line don't suit my complaint. No, as my old uncle says, 'a young fellow must sow his wild oats,' and Oxford seems a place specially set apart by Providence for that operation."

In all the wild range of accepted British maxims there is none, take it for all in all, more thoroughly abominable than this one as to the sowing of wild oats. Look at it on what side you will, and you can make nothing but a devil's maxim of it. What a man—be he young, old, or middle-aged—sows *that*, and nothing else shall he reap. The one only thing to do with wild oats, is to put them carefully into the hottest part of the fire, and get them burnt to dust, every seed of them. If you sow them no matter in what ground, up they will come, with long tough roots like couch grass, and luxurant stalks and leaves, as sure as there is a sun in heaven—a crop which it turns one's heart cold to think of. The devil, too, whose special crop they are, will see that they

thrive, and you, and nobody else, will have to reap them; and no common reaping will get them out of the soil, which must be dug down deep again and again. Well for you if with all your care you can make the ground sweet again by your dying day. "Boys will be boys" is not much better, but that has a true side to it; but this encouragement to the sowing of wild oats, is simply devilish, for it means that a young man is to give way to the temptations and follow the lusts of his age. What are we to do with the wild oats of manhood and old age—with ambition, over-reaching the false weights, hardness, suspicion, avarice—if the wild oats of youth are to be sown, and not burnt? What possible distinction can be drawn between them? If we may sow the one, why not the other?

But to get back to our story. Tom went away from Drysdale's rooms that night (after they had sorted all the tackle, which was to accompany the fishing expedition, to their satisfaction) in a disturbed state of mind. He was very much annoyed at Drysdale's way of talking, because he was getting to like the man. He was surprised and angry at being driven more and more to the conclusion that the worship of the golden calf was verily and indeed rampant in Oxford—side by side, no doubt, with much that was manly and noble, but tainting more or less the whole life of the place. In fact, what annoyed him most was, the consciousness that he himself was becoming an idolater. For he couldn't help admitting that he felt much more comfortable when standing in the quadrangles or strolling in the High Street with Drysdale in his velvet cap, and silk gown, and faultless get-up, than when doing the same things with Hardy in his faded old gown, shabby loose overcoat, and well-worn trousers. He wouldn't have had Hardy suspect the fact for all he was worth, and hoped to get over the feeling soon; but there it was unmistakably. He wondered whether Hardy had ever felt anything of the kind himself.

Nevertheless, these thoughts did not hinder him from sleeping soundly, or from getting up an hour earlier than usual to go and see Drysdale start on his expedition.

Accordingly, he was in Drysdale's rooms next morning betimes, and assisted at the early breakfast which was going on there. Blake was the only other man present. He was going with Drysdale, and entrusted Tom with a message to Miller and the Captain, that he could not pull in the boat that day, but would pay a waterman to take his place. As

oon as the gate opened, the three, accompanied by the aithful Jack, and followed by Drysdale's scout, bearing over-oats, a splendid water-proof apron lined with fur, and the ods and reels, sallied out of the college, and sought the ivery stables, patronised by the men of St. Ambrose's. Here hey found a dog cart all ready in the yard, with a strong Roman-nosed, vicious-looking, rat-tailed horse in the shafts, alled Satan by Drysdale; the leader had been sent on to the irst turnpike. The things were packed, and Jack, the bull-log, hoisted into the interior in a few minutes. Drysdale roduced a long straight horn, which he called his yard of tin probably because it was made of brass), and after refreshing imself with a blast or two, handed it over to Blake, and then nounted the dog-cart, and took the reins. Blake seated imself by his side; the help who was to accompany them, got up behind; and Jack looked wisely out from his inside place over the back-board.

"Are we all right?" said Drysdale, catching his long andem whip into a knowing double thong.

"All right, sir," said the head ostler, touching his cap.

"You'd better have come, my boy," said Drysdale to Tom, as they trotted off out of the yard; and Tom couldn't nelp envying them as he followed, and watched the dog-art lessening rapidly down the empty street, and heard the notes of the yard of tin, which Blake managed to make really musical, borne back on the soft western breeze. It was such a pleasant morning for fishing.

However, it was too late to repent, had he wished it; and o he got back to chapel, and destroyed the whole effect of he morning service on Miller's mind, by delivering Blake's nessage to that choleric coxswain as soon as chapel was over. Miller vowed for the twentieth time that Blake should be turned out of the boat, and went off to the Cap-ain's rooms to torment him, and consult what was to be done.

The weather continued magnificent—a soft, dull grey March day, and a steady wind; and the thought of the ucky fishermen, and visions of creels filled with huge three-pounders, haunted Tom at lecture, and throughout the day.

At two o'clock he was down at the river. The college eight was to go down for the first time in the season to the reaches below Nuneham, for a good training pull, and he had had notice, to his great joy, that he was to be tried in

the boat. But, great, no doubt, as was the glory, the price was a heavy one. This was the first time he had been subjected to the tender mercies of Miller, the coxswain, or had pulled behind the Captain; and it did not take long to convince him that it was a very different style of thing from anything he had as yet been accustomed to in the freshman's crew. The long steady sweep of the so-called paddle tried him almost as much as the breathless strain of the spurt.

Miller, too, was in one of his most relentless moods. He was angry at Blake's desertion, and seemed to think that Tom had something to do with it, though he simply delivered the message which had been entrusted to him; and so, though he distributed rebuke and objurgation to every man in the boat except the Captain, he seemed to our hero to take particular delight in working him. There he stood in the stern, the fiery little coxwain, leaning forward with a tiller-rope in each hand, and bending to every stroke. shouting his warnings, and rebukes, and monitions to Tom, till he drove him to his wits' end. By the time the boat came back to Hall's, his arms were so numb that he could hardly tell whether his oar was in or out of his hand; his legs were stiff and aching, and every muscle in his body felt as if it had been pulled out an inch or two. As he walked up to College, he felt as if his shoulders and legs had nothing to do with one another; in short, he had had a very hard day's work, and, after going fast asleep at a wine party, and trying in vain to rouse himself by a stroll in the streets, fairly gave in about ten o'clock, and went to bed without remembering to sport his oak.

For some hours he slept the sleep of the dead, but at last began to be conscious of voices, and the clicking of glasses, and laughter, and scraps of songs; and after turning himself once or twice in bed, to ascertain whether he was awake or no, rubbed his eyes, sat up, and became aware that something very entertaining to the parties concerned was going on in his sitting-room. After listening for a minute, he jumped up, threw on his shooting-coat, and appeared at the door of his own sitting-room, where he paused a moment to contemplate the scene which met his astonished vision. His fire recently replenished, was burning brightly in the grate, and his candles on the table, on which stood his whisky bottle, and tumblers, and hot water. On his sofa, which had been wheeled round before the fire,

reclined Drysdale, on his back, in his pet attitude, one leg crossed over the other, with a paper in his hand, from which he was singing, and in the arm-chair sat Blake, while Jack was coiled on the rug, turning himself every now and then in a sort of uneasy protest against his master's untimely hilarity. At first, Tom felt inclined to be angry, but the jolly shout of laughter with which Drysdale received him, as he stepped out into the light in night-shirt, shooting-coat, and dishevelled hair, appeased him at once.

"Why, Brown, you don't mean to say you have been in bed this last half-hour? We looked into the bed-room, and thought it was empty. Sit down, old fellow, and make yourself at home. Have a glass of grog; it's first-rate whisky."

"Well, you're a couple of cool hands, I must say," said Tom. "How did you get in?"

"Through the door, like honest men," said Drysdale. "You're the only good fellow in college to-night. When we got back our fires were out, and we've been all round college, and found all the oaks sported but yours. Never sport your oak, old boy; it's a bad habit. You don't know at what time in the morning you may entertain angels unawares."

"You're a rum pair of angels, anyhow," said Tom, taking his seat on the sofa. "But what o'clock is it?"

"Oh, about half-past one," said Drysdale. "We've had a series of catastrophes. Never got into college till near one. I thought we should never have waked that besotted little porter. However, here we are at last, you see, all right."

"So it seems," said Tom; but how about the fishing?"

"Fishing! we've never thrown a fly all day," said Drysdale.

"He is so cursedly conceited about his knowledge of the country," struck in Blake. "What with that, and his awful twist, and his incurable habit of gossiping, and his blackguard dog, and his team of a devil and a young female—"

"Hold your scandalous tongue," shouted Drysdale. "To hear *you* talking of my twist, indeed; you ate four chops and a whole chicken to-day, at dinner, to your own cheek, you know."

"That's quite another thing," said Blake. "I like to see a fellow an honest grubber at breakfast and dinner; but you've always got your nose in the manger. That's how

we all got wrong to-day, Brown. You saw what a breakfast he ate before starting; well, nothing would satisfy him but another at Whitney. There we fell in with a bird in mahogany tops, and, as usual, Drysdale began chumming with him. He knew all about the fishing of the next three counties. I daresay he did. My private belief is, that he is one of the Hungerford town council, who let the fishing there; at any rate, he swore it was no use our going to Fairford; the only place where fish would be in season was Hungerford. Of course Drysdale swallowed it all, and nothing would serve him but that we should turn off for Hungerford at once. Now, I did go once to Hungerford races, and I ventured to suggest that we should never get near the place. Not a bit of use; he knew every foot of the country. It was then about nine; he would guarantee that we should be there by twelve, at latest."

"So we should have been, but for accidents," struck in Drysdale.

"Well, at any rate, what we did was to drive into Farringdon, instead of Hungerford, both horses dead done up at twelve o'clock, after missing our way about twenty times."

"Because you would put in your oar," said Drysdale.

"Then grub again," went on Blake, "and an hour to bait the horses. I knew we were as likely to get to Jericho as to Hungerford. However, he would start; but, luckily about two miles from Farringdon, old Satan bowled quietly into a bank, broke a shaft, and deposited us then and there. He wasn't such a fool as to be going to Hungerford at that time of day; the first time in his wicked old life that I ever remember seeing him do anything that pleased me."

"Come, now," said Drysdale, do you mean to say you ever sat behind a better wheeler, when he's in a decent temper?"

"Can't say," said Blake; "never sat behind him in good temper, that I can remember."

"I'll trot him five miles out and home in a dog-cart, on any road out of Oxford, against any horse you can bring for a fiver."

"Done!" said Blake.

"But were you upset?" said Tom. "How did you get into the bank?"

"Why, you see," said Drysdale, "Jessy,—that's the little blood-mare, my leader,—is very young, and as shy an

skittish as the rest of her sex. We turned a corner sharp, and came right upon a gipsy encampment. Up she went into the air in a moment, and then turned right around and came head on at the cart. I gave her the double thong across her face to send her back again, and Satan, seizing the opportunity, rushed against the bank, dragging her with him, and snapping the shaft."

"And so ended our day's fishing," said Blake. "And next moment out jumps that brute Jack, and pitches into the gipsy's dog, who had come up very naturally to have a look at what was going on. Down jumps Drysdale to see that his beast gets fair play, leaving me and the help to look after the wreck, and keep his precious wheeler from kicking the cart into little pieces."

"Come, now," said Drysdale, "you must own we fell on our legs after all. Hadn't we a jolly afternoon? I'm thinking of turning tramp, Brown. We spent three or four hours in that camp, and Blake got spooney on a gipsy girl, and has written I don't know how many songs on them. Didn't you hear us singing them just now?"

"But how did you get the cart mended?" said Tom.

"Oh, the tinker patched up the shaft for us,—a cunning old beggar, the *père de famille* of the encampment; up to every move on the board. He wanted to have a deal with me for Jessy. But 'pon my honor, we had a good time of it. There was the old tinker, mending the shaft, in his fur cap, with a black pipe, one inch long, sticking out of his mouth; and the old brown parchment of a mother, with her head in a red handkerchief, smoking a ditto pipe to the tinker's, who told our fortunes, and talked like a printed book. Then there was his wife, and the slip of a girl who bowled over Blake there, and half a dozen ragged brats; and a fellow on a tramp, not a gipsy—some runaway apprentice, I take it, but a jolly dog—with no luggage but an old fiddle, on which he scraped away uncommonly well, and set Blake making rhymes as we sat in the tent. You never heard any of his songs. Here's one for each of us; we're going to get up the characters and sing them about the country;—now for a rehearsal; I'll be the tinker."

"No; you must take the servant girl," said Blake.

"Well, we'll toss up for characters when the time comes. You begin then; here's a song," and he handed one of the papers to Blake. who began singing—

"Squat on a green plot,
We scorn a bench or settle, oh,
Plying or trying,
A spice of every trade;
Razors we grind,
Ring a pig, or mend a kettle, oh;
Come, what d'ye lack?
Speak it out, my pretty maid.

"I'll set your scissors, while
My granny tells you plainly,
Who stole your barley meal,
Your butter or your heart;
Tell if your husband will
Be handsome or ungainly,
Ride in a coach and four, or
Rough it in a cart."

"Enter Silly Sally; that's I, for the present you see," said Drysdale; and he began—

"Oh, dear! what can the matter be?
Dear, dear! what can the matter be?
Oh, dear! what can the matter be?
All in a pucker be I;
I'm growing uneasy about Billy Martin,
For love is a casualty desper't unsartin.
Law! yonder's the gipsy as tells folk's fortin;
I'm half in the mind for to try."

"Then you must be the old gipsy woman, Mother Patrico; here's your part Brown."

"But what's the tune?" said Tom.

"Oh, you can't miss it; go ahead;" and so Tom, who was dropping into the humor of the thing, droned out from the MS. handed to him—

"Chairs to mend,
Old chairs to mend,
Rush bottom'd cane bottom'd,
Chairs to mend.
Maid, approach,
If thou wouldst know
What the stars
May deign to show."

"Now, tinker," said Daysdale, nodding at Blake, who rattled on,—

"Chance feeds us, chance leads us;
Round the land in jollity;
Rag-dealing, nag-stealing,
Everywhere we roam;
Brass mending, ass vending,
Happier than the quality;
Swipes soaking, pipes smoking,
Ev'ry barn a home;
Tink, tink, a tink a tink,
Our life is full of fun, boys;
Clink tink, a tink a tink,
Our busy hammers ring;
Clink, tink, a tink a tink,
Our job will soon be done boys;
Then tune we merrily
The bladder and the string."

DRYSDALE, *as Silly Sally.*

"Oh, dear! what can the matter be?
Dear, dear! what can the matter be?
Oh, dear! what can the matter be?
There's such a look in her eye.
Oh, lawk! I declare I be all of a tremble;
My mind it misgives me about Sukey Wimble,
A splatter faced wench neither civil nor nimble:
She'll bring Billy to beggary."

TOM, *as Mother Patrico.*

"Show your hand;
Come show your hand;
Would you know
What fate has planned;
Heaven forefend!
Ay, heav'n forefend!
What may these
Cross lines portend?"

BLAKE, *as the Tinker.*

"Owl, pheasant, all's pleasant;
Nothing comes amiss to us;
Hare, rabbit, snare, nab it;
Cock, or hen, or kite;
Tom cat, with strong fat,
A dainty supper is to us;
Hedge-hog and sedge frog
To stew is our delight;

Bow, wow, with angry bark
My lady's dog assails us;
We sack him up, and clap
A stopper on his din.
Now pop him in the pot;
His store of meat avails us;
Wife cook him nice and hot,
And granny tans his skin."

DRYSDALE, *as Silly Sally.*

"Oh, lawk! what a calamity!
Oh, my! what a calamity!
Oh, dear! what a calamity!
Lost and forsaken be I.

I'm out of my senses, and nought will content me,
But pois'ning Poll Ady who helped circumvent me;
Come tell me the means, for no power shall prevent me:
Oh, give me revenge, or die."

TOM, *as Mother Patrico.*

"Pause awhile!
Anon, anon!
Give me time
The stars to con.
True love's course
Shall yet run smooth;
True shall prove
The favor'd youth."

BLAKE, *as the Tinker.*

"Tink tink, a tink a tink,
We'll work and then get tipsy, oh!
Clink tink on each chink,
Our busy hammers ring.
Tink tink, a tink a tink,
How merry lives a gypsy, oh!
Chanting and ranting;
As happy as a king."

DRYSDALE, *as Silly Sally.*

"Joy! joy! all will end happily!
Joy! joy! all will end happily!

Joy! joy! all will end happily!
Bill will be constant to I.

Oh, thankee, good dame, here's my purse and my thimble;
A fig for Poll Ady and fat Sukey Wimble;
I now could jump over the steeple so nimble;
With joy I be ready to cry."

TOM, *as Mother Patrico.*

"William shall
Be rich and great;
And shall prove
A constant mate.
Thank not me,
But thank your fate,
On whose high
Decrees I wait."

"Well, won't that do? won't it bring the house down? I'm going to send for dresses to London, and we'll start next week."

"What, on the tramp, singing these songs?"

"Yes; we'll begin in some out-of-the-way place till we get used to it."

"And end in the lock-up, I should say," said Tom; "it'll be a good lark, though. Now, you haven't told me how you got home."

"Oh, we left camp at about five—"

"The tinker having extracted a sovereign from Drysdale," interrupted Blake.

"What did you give to the little gypsy yourself?" retorted Drysdale; "I saw your adieus under the thorn-bush. —Well, we got on all right to old Murdock's, at Kingston Inn, by about seven, and there we had dinner; and after dinner the old boy came in. He and I are great chums, for I'm often there, and always ask him in. But that beggar Blake, who never saw him before, cut me clean out in five minutes. Fancy his swearing he is Scotch, and that an ancestor of his in the sixteenth century married a Murdock!"

"Well, when you come to think what a lot of ancestors one must have had at that time, it's probably true," said Blake.

"At any rate, it took," went on Drysdale. "I thought old Murdock would have wept on his neck. As it was, he

scattered snuff enough to fill a pint pot over him out of his mull, and began talking Gaelic. And Blake had the cheek to jabber a lot of gibberish back to him, as if he understood every word."

"Gibberish! it was the purest Gaelic," said Blake laughing.

"I heard a lot of Greek words myself," said Drysdale; "but old Murdock was too pleased at hearing his own clapper going, and too full of whisky, to find him out."

"Let alone that I doubt whether he remembers more than about five words of his native tongue himself," said Blake.

"The old boy got so excited that he went up stairs for his plaid and dirk, and dressed himself up in them, apologising that he could not appear in the full grab of old Gaul, in honor of his new-found relative, as his daughter had cut up his old kilt for 'trews for the barnies' during his absence from home. Then they took to more toddy and singing Scotch songs, till at eleven o'clock they were standing on their chairs, right hands clasped, each with one foot on the table, glasses in the other hands, the toddy flying over the room as they swayed about roaring like maniacs, what was it?—oh, I have it:

'*Wug*-an-toorey all agree,
Wug-an-toorey, *wug*-an-toorey.'"

"He hasn't told you that he tried to join us, and tumbled over the back of his chair into the dirty-plate basket."

"A libel! a libel!" shouted Drysdale; "the leg of my chair broke, and I stepped down gracefully and safely, and when I looked up and saw what a tottery performance it was, I concluded to give them a wide berth. It would be no joke to have old Murdock topple over on to you. I left them 'wug-an-tooreying,' and went out to look after the trap, which was ordered to be at the door at half-past ten. I found Murdock's ostler very drunk, but sober compared with that rascally help whom we had been fools enough to take with us. They had got the trap out and the horses in, but that old rascal Satan was standing so quiet that I suspected something wrong. Sure enough, when I came to look, they had him up to the cheek on one side of his mouth, and third bar on the other, his belly-band buckled across his back, and no kicking strap. The old brute was chuckling to himself what he would do with us as soon as

we had started in that trim. It took half-an hour getting all right, as I was the only one able to do anything."

"Yes, you would have said so," said Blake, "if you had seen him trying to put Jack up behind. He made six shots with the old dog, and dropped him about on his head and the broad of his back as if he had been a bundle of ells."

"The fact is, that that rascally ostler had made poor old Jack drunk too," explained Drysdale, "and he wouldn't be lifted straight. However, we got off at last, and hadn't gone a mile before the help (who was maundering away some cursed sentimental ditty or other behind), lurched more heavily than usual, and pitched off into the night somewhere. Blake looked for him for half-an-hour, and couldn't find a hair."

"You don't mean to say the man tumbled off and you never found him?" said Tom in horror.

"Well, that's about the fact," said Drysdale; "but it isn't so bad as you think. We had no lamps, and it was an uncommon bad night for running by holloas."

"But a first-rate night for running by scent," broke in Blake; "the fellow leant against me until he made his exit, and I'd have backed myself to have hit the scent again half-a-mile off, if the wind had only been right."

"He may have broken his neck," said Tom.

"Can a fellow sing with a broken neck?" said Drysdale; "hanged if I know! But don't I tell you, we heard him maundering on somewhere or other? and when Blake shouted, he answered in endearing terms: and when Blake swore, he rebuked him piously out of the pitch darkness, and told him to go home and repent. I nearly dropped off the box laughing at them; and then he 'uplifted his testimony,' as he called it, against me, for driving a horse called Satan. I believe he's a ranting methodist spouter."

"I tried hard to find him," said Blake; "For I should dearly have liked to have kicked him safely into the ditch."

"At last Black Will himself couldn't have held Satan another minute. So Blake scrambled up, and away we came, and knocked into college at one for a finish: the rest you know."

"Well, you've had a pretty good day of it," said Tom, who had been hugely amused; "but I should feel nervous about the help, if I were you."

"Oh, he'll come to no grief, I'll be bound, said Drysdale; "but what o'clock is it?"

"Three," said Blake, looking at his watch an getting up; "time to turn in."

"The first time I ever heard you say that," said Drysdale.

"Yes; but you forget we were up this morning before the world was aired. Good-night, Brown."

And off the two went, leaving Tom to sport his oak this time, and retire in wonder to bed.

Drysdale was asleep, with Jack curled up on the foot of the bed, in ten minutes. Blake, by the help of wet towels and a knoted piece of whipcord round his forehead, read Pinder till the chapel bell began to ring.

CHAPTER VII.

AN EXPLOSION.

Our hero soon began to feel that he was contracting his first college friendship. The great, strong, badly-dressed, badly-appointed servitor, who seemed almost at the same time utterly reckless of, and nervously alive to, the opinion of all around him, with his bursts of womanly tenderness and Berserker rage, alternating like the storms and sunshine of a July day on a high moorland, his keen sense of humor and appreciation of all the good things of this life, the use and enjoyment of which he was so steadily denying himself from high principle, had from the first seized powerfully on all Tom's sympathies, and was daily gaining more hold upon him.

Blessed is the man who has the gift of making friends; for it is one of God's best gifts. It involves many things, but above all, the power of going out of oneself, and seeing and appreciating whatever is noble and living in another man.

But even to him who has the gift, it is often a great puzzle to find out whether a man is really a friend or not. The following is recommended as a test in the case of any man about whom you are not quite sure; especially if he should happen to have more of this world's goods, either in the shape of talents, rank, money, or what not, than you—

Fancy the man stripped stark naked of every thing in the world, except an old pair of trousers and a shirt, for decency's sake, without even a name to him, and dropped down in the middle of Holborn or Piccadilly. Would you go up to him then and there, and lead him out from amongst the cabs and omnibuses, and take him to your own home and feed him and clothe him, and stand by him against all the world, to your last sovereign, and your last leg of mutton? If you wouldn't do this you have no right to call him by the sacred name of friend. If you would, the odds are that he would do the same by you, and you may count yourself a rich man. For, probably were friendship expressible by, or convertible into, current coin of the realm, one such friend would be worth to a man, at least 100,000*l.* How many millionaires are there in England? I can't even guess; but more by a good many, I fear, than there are men who have ten real friends. But friendship is not expressible or convertible. It is more precious than wisdom; and wisdom "cannot be gotten for gold, nor shall rubies be mentioned in comparison thereof." Not all the riches that ever came out of earth and sea are worth the assurance of one such real abiding friendship in your heart of hearts.

But for the worth of a friendship commonly so called—meaning thereby a sentiment founded on the good dinners, good stories, opera stalls, and days' shooting you have gotten or hope to get out of a man, the snug things in his gift, and his powers of procuring enjoyment of one kind or another to miserable body or intellect—why, such a friendship as that is to be appraised easily enough, if you find it worth your while; but you will have to pay your pound of flesh for it one way or another—you may take your oath of that. If you follow my advice, you will take a 10*l.* note down, and retire to your crust of bread and liberty.

Tom was rapidly falling into friendship with Hardy. He was not bound hand and foot and carried away captive yet, but he was already getting deep in the toils.

One evening he found himself as usual at Hardy's door about eight o'clock. The oak was open, but he got no answer when he knocked at the inner door. Nevertheless he entered, having quite got over all shyness or ceremony by this time. The room was empty, but two tumblers and the black bottle stood on the table, and the kettle was hissing away on the hob. "Ah," thought Tom, "he expects

me, I see;" so he turned his back to the fire and made himself at home. A quarter of an hour passed, and still Hardy did not return. "Never knew him out so long before at this time of night," thought Tom. "Perhaps he's at some party. I hope so. It would do him a good deal of good; and I know he might go out if he liked. Next term, see if I won't make him more sociable. It's a stupid custom that freshmen don't give parties in their first term, or I'd do it at once. Why won't he be more sociable? No, after all, sociable isn't the word; he's a very sociable fellow at bottom. What in the world is it that he wants?"

And so Tom balanced himself on the two hind legs of one of the Windsor chairs, and betook himself to pondering what it was exactly which ought to be added to Hardy to make him an unexceptional object of hero-worship; when the man himself came suddenly into the room, slamming his oak behind him, and casting his cap and gown fiercely on to the sofa before he noticed our hero.

Tom jumped up at once. "My dear fellow, what's the matter?" he said; "I'm sorry I came in; shall I go?"

"No—don't go—sit down," said Hardy, abruptly; and then began to smoke fast without saying another word.

Tom waited a few minutes watching for him, and then broke silence again.—

"I am sure something is the matter, Hardy; you look dreadfully put out—what is it?"

"What is it? said Hardy, bitterly; "Oh, nothing at all—nothing at all; a gentle lesson to servitors as to the duties of their position; not pleasant, perhaps, for a youngster to swallow; but I ought to be used to such things at any rate by this time. I beg your pardon for seeming put out."

"Do tell me what it is," said Tom. "I'm sure I am very sorry for anything which annoys you."

"I believe you are," said Hardy, looking at him, "and I'm much obliged to you for it. What do you think of that fellow Chanter's offering Smith, the junior servitor, a boy just come up, a bribe of ten pounds to prick him in at chapel when he isn't there?"

"The dirty blackguard," said Tom; "by Jove he ought to be cut. He will be cut, won't he? You don't mean that he really did offer him the money?"

"I do," said Hardy, "and the poor little fellow came here after hall to ask me what he should do, with tears in his eyes."

"Chanter ought to be horsewhipped in quad," said Tom. "I will go and call on Smith directly. What did you do?"

"Why, as soon as I could master myself enough not to lay hands on him," said Hardy, "I went across to his rooms where he was entertaining a select party, and just gave him his choice between writing an abject apology then and there to my dictation, or having the whole business laid before the principal to morrow morning. He chose the former alternative, and I made him write such a letter as I don't think he will forget in a hurry."

"That's good," said Tom; "but he ought to have been horsewhipped too. It makes one's fingers itch to think of it. However, Smith's all right now."

"All right!" said Hardy, bitterly. "I don't know what you call 'all right.' Probably the boy's self-respect is hurt for life. You can't salve over this sort of thing with an apology-plaster."

"Well, I hope it isn't so bad as that," said Tom.

"Wait till you've tried it yourself," said Hardy, "I'll tell you what it is; one or two things of this sort—and I've seen many more than that in my time—sink down into you, and leave marks like a red-hot iron."

"But, Hardy, now, really, did you ever know a bribe offered before?" said Tom.

Hardy thought for a moment. "No," said he, "I can't say that I have; but things as bad, or nearly as bad, often." He paused a minute, and then went on; "I tell you, if it were not for my dear old father, who would break his heart after it, I would cut the whole concern to-morrow. I've been near doing it twenty times, and enlisting in a good regiment."

"Would it be any better there, though?" said Tom, faintly, for he felt that he was in a magazine.

"Better! yes, it must be better," said Hardy; "at any rate the youngsters there are marchers and fighters; besides, there would be in the ranks and know one's place. Here one by way of being a gentleman—God save the mark! A young officer, be he never such a fop or profligate, must take his turn at guard, and carry his life in his hand all over the world wherever he is sent, or he has to leave the service. Service!—yes that's the word; that's what makes every young red-coat respectable, though he mayn't think it. He is serving his Queen, his country—the devil, too, perhaps—very likely—but still the other is some sort. He is bound to

it, sworn to it, must do it; more or less. But a youngster up here, with health, strength, and heaps of money—bound to no earthly service, and choosing that of the devil and his own lusts, because some service or other he must have—I want to know where else under the sun you can see such a sight as that?"

Tom mumbled something to the effect that it was by no means necessary that men at Oxford, either rich or poor, need embark in the service which had been alluded to; which remark, however, only seemed to add fuel to the fire. For Hardy now rose from his chair, and began striding up and down the room, his right arm behind his back, the hand gripping his left elbow, his left hand brought round in front close to his body, and holding the bowl of his pipe, from which he was blowing off clouds in puffs like an engine just starting with a heavy train. The attitude was one of a man painfully trying to curb himself. His eyes burnt like coals under his deep brows. The man altogether looked awful, and Tom felt particularly uncomfortable and puzzled. After a turn or two, Hardy burst out again—

"And who are they, I should like to know, these fellows who dare to offer bribes to gentlemen? How do they live? What do they do for themselves or for this University? By heaven, they are ruining themselves body and soul, and making this place, which was meant for the training of learned and brave and righteous Englishmen, a lie and a snare. And who tries to stop them? Here and there a don is doing his work like a man; the rest are either washing their hands of the business, and spending their time in looking after those who don't want looking after, and cramming those who would be better without the cramming, or else standing by, cap in hand, and shouting, 'Oh young men of large fortune and great connexions! You future dispensers of the good things of this Realm, come to our colleges, and all shall be made pleasant!' and the shout is taken up by undergraduates, and tradesmen, and horse-dealers, and cricket-cads, and dog-fanciers, 'Come to us, and us, and us, and we will be your toadies!' Let them; let them toady and cringe to their precious idols, till they bring this noble old place down about their ears. Down it will come, down it must come, for down it ought to come, if it can find nothing better to worship than rank, money, and intellect. But to live in the place and love it too, and to see all this

going on, and groan and writhe under it, and not be able——"

At this point in his speech Hardy came to the turning-point in his march at the farther end of the room, just opposite his crockery cupboard; but, instead of turning as usual, he paused, let go the hold on his left elbow, poised himself for a moment to get a purchase, and then dashed his right fist full against one of the panels. Crash went the slight deal boards, as if struck with a sledge-hammer, and crash went glass and crockery behind. Tom jumped to his feet, in doubt whether an assault on him would not follow; but the fit was over, and Hardy looked round at him with a rueful and deprecating face. For a moment Tom tried to look solemn and heroic, as befitted the occasion; but, somehow, the sudden contrast flashed upon him, and sent him off, before he could think about it, into a roar of laughter, ending in a violent fit of coughing; for in his excitement he had swallowed a mouthful of smoke. Hardy, after holding out for a moment, gave in to the humor of the thing, and the appealing look passed into a smile, and the smile into a laugh, as he turned towards his damaged cupboard, and began opening it carefully in a legitimate manner.

"I say, old fellow," said Tom, coming up, "I should think you must find it an expensive amusement. Do you often walk into your cupboard like that?"

"You see, Brown, I am naturally a man of a very quick temper."

"So it seems," said Tom; "but does't it hurt your knuckles? I should have something softer put up for me if I were you; your bolster, with a velvet cap on it, or a doctor of divinity's gown, now."

"You be hanged," said Hardy, as he disengaged the last splinter, and gently opened the ill-used cupboard door. "Oh, thunder and turf, look here," he went on, as the state of affairs inside disclosed itself to his view; "how many times have I told that thief George never to put anything on this side of my cupboard! Two tumblers smashed to bits, and I've only four in the world. Lucky we had those two out on the table."

"And here's a great piece out of the sugar-basin, you see," said Tom, holding up the broken article; "and, let me see, one cup and three saucers gone to glory."

"Well, it's lucky it's no worse," said Hardy, peering over his shoulder; "I had a lot of odd saucers, and there's enough left to last my time. Never mind the smash, let's sit down again and be reasonable."

Tom sat down in high good humor. He felt himself more on an equality with his host than he had done before, and even thought he might venture on a little mild expostulation or lecturing. But while he was considering how to improve the occasion Hardy began himself.

"I shouldn't go so furious, Brown, if I didn't care about the place so much. I can't bear to think of it as a sort of learning machine, in which I am to grind for three years to get certain degrees which I want. No—this place, and Cambridge, and our great schools, are the heart of dear old England. Did you ever read Secretary Cook's address to the Vice-Chancellor, Doctors, &c. in 1636—more critical times, perhaps, even than ours? No? Well, listen then;" and he went to his bookcase, took down a book, and read; "'The very truth is, that all wise princes respect the welfare of their estates, and consider that schools and universities are (as in a body) the noble and vital parts, which being vigorous and sound send good blood and active spirits into the veins and arteries, which cause health and strength; or, if feeble or ill-affected, corrupt all the vital parts; whereupon grow diseases, and in the end, death itself." A low standard up here for ten years may corrupt half the parishes in the kingdom."

"That's true," said Tom, "but——"

"Yes; and so one has a right to be jealous for Oxford. Every Englisman ought to be,"

"But I really think, Hardy, that you're unreasonable," said Tom, who had no mind to be done out of his chance of lecturing his host.

"I am very quick-tempered," said Hardy, "as I told you just now."

"But you're not fair on the fast set up here. They can't help being rich men, after all."

"No; so one oughtn't to expect them to be going through the eyes of needles, I suppose. But do you mean to say you ever heard of a more dirty, blackguard business than this?" said Hardy; "he ought to be expelled the University."

"I admit that," said Tom; "but it was only one of them,

you know. I don't believe there's another man in the set who would have done it."

"Well, I hope not," said Hardy; "I may be hard on them—as you say, they can't help being rich. But, now, I don't want you to think me a violent, one-sided fanatic; shall I tell you some of my experiences up here—some passages from the life of a servitor?"

"Do," said Tom; "I should like nothing so well."

CHAPTER VIII.

HARDY'S HISTORY.

"My father is an old commander in the Royal Navy. He was a second cousin of Nelson's Hardy, and that, I believe, was what led him into the navy, for he had no interest whatever of his own. It was a visit which Nelson's Hardy, then a young lieutenant, paid to his relative, my grandfather, which decided my father, he has told me: but he always had a strong bent to the sea, though he was a boy of very studious habits.

"However, those were times when brave men who knew and loved their profession couldn't be overlooked, and my dear old father fought his way up step by step—not very fast certainly, but still fast enough to keep him in heart about his chances in life. I can show you the accounts of some of the affairs he was in, in James's History, which you see up on my shelf there, or I could tell them you myself; but I hope some day you will know him, and then you will hear them in perfection.

"My father was made commander towards the end of the war, and got a ship, in which he sailed with a convoy of merchantmen from Bristol. It was the last voyage he ever made in active service; but the Admiralty was so well satisfied with his conduct in it that they kept his ship in commission two years after peace was declared. And well they might be; for in the Spanish main he fought an action which lasted, on and off, for two days, with a French sloop of war, and a privateer, which he always thought was an American, either of which ought to have been a match for

him. But he had been with Vincent in the *Arrow*, and was not likely to think much of such small odds as that. At any rate he beat them off, and not a prize could either of them make out of his convoy, though I believe his ship was never fit for anything afterwards, and was broken up as soon as she was out of commission. We have got her compasses, and the old flag which flew at the peak through the whole voyage, at home now. It was my father's own flag, and his fancy to have it always flying. More than half the men were killed, or badly hit—the dear old father amongst the rest. A ball took off part of his knee cap, and he had to fight the last six hours of the action sitting in a chair on the quarter-deck; but he says it made the men fight better than when he was among them, seeing him sitting there sucking oranges.

"Well, he came home with a stiff leg. The Bristol merchants gave him the freedom of the city in a gold box, and a splendidly-mounted sword with an inscription on the blade, which hangs over the mantel-piece at home. When I first left home, I asked him to give me his old service sword, which used to hang by the other, and he gave it me at once, though I was only a lad of seventeen, as he would give me his right eye, dear old father, which is the only one he has now; the other he lost from a cutlass wound in a boarding-party. There it hangs, and those are his epaulettes in the tin case. They used to lie under my pillow before I had a room of my own, and many a cowardly down-hearted fit have they helped me to pull through, Brown; and many a mean act have they helped to keep me from doing. There they are always; and the sight of them brings home the dear old man to me as nothing else does, hardly even his letters. I must be a great scoundrel to go very wrong with such a father.

"Let's see—where was I? Oh, yes; I remember. Well, my father got his box and sword, and some very handsome letters from several great men. We have them all in a book at home, and I know them by heart. The ones he values most are from Collingwood, and his old captain, Vincent, and from his cousin Nelson's Hardy, who didn't come off very well himself after the war. But my poor old father never got another ship. For some time he went up every year to London, and was always, he says, very kindly received by the people in power, and often dined with one and another Lord of the Admiralty who had been an old

messmate. But he was longing for employment; and it used to prey on him while he was in his prime to feel year after year slipping away and he still without a ship. But why should I abuse people, and think it hard, when he doesn't? 'You see, Jack,' he said to me the last time we spoke about it, 'after all I was a battered old hulk, lame and half blind. So was Nelson, you'll say: but every man isn't a Nelson, my boy. And though I might think I could con or fight a ship as well as ever, I can't say other folk who didn't know me were wrong for not agreeing with me. Would you, now Jack, appoint a lame and blind man to command your ship, if you had one?' But he left off applying for work soon after he was fifty, (I just remember the time), for he began to doubt then whether he was quite so fit to command a small vessel as a younger man; and, though he had a much better chance after that of getting a ship (for William IV. came to the throne, who knew all about him), he never went near the Admiralty again. 'God forbid,' he said, 'that his Majesty should take me if there's a better man to be had.'

"But I have forgotten to tell you how I came into the world, and am telling you my father's story instead of my own. You seem to like hearing about it though, and you can't understand one without the other. However, when my father was made commander, he married, and bought, with his prize-money and savings, a cottage and piece of land, in a village on the south coast, where he left his wife when he went on his last voyage. They had waited some years, for neither of them had any money; but there never were two people who wanted it less, or did more good without it to all who came near them. They had a hard time of it too, for my father had to go on half-pay; and a commander's half-pay isn't much to live upon and keep a family. For they had a family; three, besides me; but they are all gone. And my mother, too; she died when I was quite a boy, and left him and me alone; and since then I have never known what a woman's love is, for I have no near relations; and a man with such prospects as mine had better keep down all—however, there's no need to go into any notions; I won't wander any more if I can help it.

"I know my father was very poor when my mother died, and I think (though he never told me so) that he had mortgaged our cottage, and was very near having to sell it at one time. The expenses of my mother's illness had been very

heavy; I know a good deal of the best furniture was sold—all, indeed, except a handsome arm-chair, and a little work-table of my mother's. She used to sit in the chair, in her last illness, on our lawn, and watch the sunsets. And he sat by her, and watched her, and sometimes read the Bible to her; while I played about with a big black dog we had then, named Vincent, after my father's old captain; or with Burt, his old boatswain, who came with his wife to live with my father before I can recollect, and lives with us still. He did everything in the garden and about the house; and in the house, too, when his wife was ill, for he can turn his hand to anything, like most old salts. It was he who rigged up the mast and weather-cock on the lawn, and used to let me run up the old flag on Sundays, and on my father's wedding-day, and on the anniversary of his action, and of Vincent's action in the *Arrow*.

"After my mother's death my father sent away all the servants, for the boatswain and his wife are more like friends. I was wrong to say that no woman has loved me since my mother's death, for I believe dear old Nanny loves me as if I were her own child. My father, after this, used to sit silent for hours together, doing nothing but look over the sea; but, except for that, was not much changed. After a short time he took to teaching me to read, and from that time I never was away from him for an hour, except when I was asleep, until I went out into the world.

"As I told you, my father was naturally fond of study. He had kept up the little Latin he had learnt as a boy, and had always been reading whatever he could lay his hands on; so that I couldn't have had a better tutor. They were no lessons to me, particularly the geographical ones; for there was no part of the world's sea-coast that he did not know, and could tell me what it and the people who lived there were like; and often when Burt happened to come in at such times, and heard what my father was talking about, he would give us some of his adventures and ideas of geography, which were very queer indeed.

"When I was nearly ten, a new vicar came. He was about my father's age, and a widower, like him; only he had no child. Like him, too, he had no private fortune, and the living is a very poor one. He soon became very intimate with us, and made my father his churchwarden; and, after being present at some of our lessons, volunteered to teach me Greek, which, he said, it was time I should begin to learn.

This was great relief to my father who had bought a Greek grammer and dictionary, and a delectus, some time before; and I could see him often, dear old fatner, with his glass in his eye, puzzling away over them when I was playing, or reading Cook's Voyages, for it had grown to be the wish of his heart that I should be a scholar, and should go into orders. So he was going to teach me Greek himself, for there was no one in the parish except the Vicar who knew a word of anything but English—so that he could not have got me a tutor, and the thought of sending me to school had never crossed his mind, even if he could have afforded to do either. My father only sat by at Greek lessons, and took no part; but first he began to put in a word here and there, and then would repeat words and sentences himself, and look over my book while I construed, and very soon was just as regular a pupil of the Vicar's as I.

"The Vicar was for the most part very proud of his pupils, and the kindest of masters; but every now and then he used to be hard on my father, which made me furious, though he never seemed to mind it. I used to make mistakes on purpose at those times to show that I was worse than he at any rate. But this only happened after we had had a political discussion at dinner; for we dined at three, and took to our Greek afterwards, to suit the Vicar's time, who was generally a guest. My father is a Tory, of course, as you may guess, and the Vicar was a Liberal, of a very mild sort, as I have since thought; 'a Whig of '88,' he used to call himself. But he was in favor of the Reform Bill, which was enough for my father, who lectured him about loyalty, and opening the flood-gates to revolution; and used to call up old Burt from the kitchen, where he was smoking his pipe, and ask him what he used to think of the Radicals on board ship; and Burt's regular reply was—

"'Skulks, yer honor, regular skulks. I wouldn't give the twist of a fiddler's elbow for all the lot of 'em as ever pretended to handle a swab, or handle a topsail.'

"The Vicar always tried to argue, but, as Burt and I were the only audience, my father was always triumphant; only he took it out of us afterwards, at the Greek. Often I used to think, when they were reading history, and talking about the characters, that my father was much the more liberal of the two.

"About this time he bought a small half-decked boat of ten tons, for he and Burt agreed that I ought to learn to handle a boat, although I was not to go to sea; and when they got the Vicar in the boat on the summer evenings (for he was always ready for a sale though he was a very bad sailor), I believe they used to steer as near the wind as possible, and get into short chopping seas on purpose. But I don't think he was ever frightened, though he used sometimes to be very ill.

"And so I went on, learned all I could from my father, and the Vicar, and old Burt, till I was sixteen. By that time I had begun to think for myself; and I had made up my mind that it was time I should do something. No boy ever wanted to leave home less, I believe; but I saw that I must make a move if I was ever to be what my father wished me to be. So I spoke to the Vicar, and he quite agreed with me, and made inquiries amongst his acquaintance; and so, before I was seventeen, I was offered the place of under-master in a commercial school, about twenty miles from home. The Vicar brought the offer, and my father was very angry at first; but we talked him over, and so I took the situation.

"And I am very glad I did, although there were many drawbacks. The salary was 35*l.* a year, and for that I had to drill all the boys in English, and arithmetic, and Latin, and to teach the Greek grammer to the five or six who paid extra to learn it. Out of the school I had always to be with them, and was responsible for the discipline. It was weary work very often, and what seemed the worst part of it to me, at the time, was the trade spirit which leavened the whole of the establishment. The master and owner of the school, who was a keen vulgar man, but always civil enough to me, thought of nothing but what would pay. And this seemed to be what filled the school. Fathers sent their boys, because the place was so practical, and nothing was taught (except as extras) which was not to be of so-called real use to the boys in the world. We had our work quite clearly laid down for us; and it was, not to put the boys in the way of getting real knowledge or understanding, or any of the things Solomon talks about, but to put them in the way of getting on.

"I spent three years at that school, and in that time I grounded myself pretty well in Latin and Greek—better, I believe, than I should have done if I had been at a first-rate

school myself; and I hope I did the boys some good, and taught some of them that cunning was not the best quality to start in life with. And I was not often very unhappy, for I could always look forward to my holidays with my father.

"However, I own that I never was better pleased than one Christmas, when the Vicar came over to our cottage, and brought with him a letter from the Principal of St. Ambrose College, Oxford, appointing me to a servitorship. My father was even more delighted than I, and that evening produced a bottle of old rum, which was part of his ship's stock, and had gone all through his action, and been in his cellar ever since. And we three in the parlor, and old Burt and his wife in the kitchen, finished it that night; the boatswain, I must own, taking the lion's share. The Vicar took occasion, in the course of the evening, to hint that it was only poor men who took these places at the University; and that I might find some inconvenience, and suffer some annoyance, by not being exactly in the same position as other men. But my dear old father would not hear of it; I was now going to be amongst the very pick of English gentlemen—what could it matter whether I had money or not? That was the last thing which real gentlemen thought of. Besides, why was I to be so very poor? he should be able to allow me whatever would be necessary to make me comfortable. 'But, Jack,' he said suddenly, later in the evening, 'one meets low fellows everywhere. You have met them, I know, often at the confounded school, and will meet them again. Never you be ashamed of your poverty, my boy.' I promised readily enough, for I didn't think I could be more tried in that way than I had been already. I had lived for three years amongst people whose class notoriously measured all things by a money standard; now that was all over, I thought. It's easy making promises in the dark. The Vicar, however, would not let the matter rest; so we resolved ourselves into a Committee of Ways and Means, and my father engaged to lay before us an exact statement of his affairs next day. I went to the door with the Vicar, and he told me to come and see him in the morning.

"I half-guessed what he wanted to see me for. He knew all my father's affairs perfectly well, and wished to prepare me for what was to come in the evening. 'Your father,' he said, 'is one of the most liberal men I ever met; he is al-

most the only person who gives anything to the schools and other charities in this parish, and he gives to the utmost. You would not wish him, I know, to cut off these gifts, which bring the highest reward with them, when they are made in the spirit in which he makes them. Then he is getting old, and you would never like him to deny himself the comforts (and few enough they are) which he is used to. He has nothing but his half-pay to live on; and out of that he pays 50*l.* a year for insurance; for he has insured his life, that you may have something besides the cottage and land when he dies. I only tell you this that you may know the facts beforehand. I am sure you would never take a penny from him if you could help it. But he won't be happy unless he makes you some allowance; and he can do it without crippling himself. He has been paying off an old mortgage on his property here for many years, by instalments of 40*l.* a year, and the last was paid last Michaelmas; so that it will not inconvenience him to make you that allowance. Now, you will not be able to live properly upon that at Oxford, even as a servitor. I speak to you now, my dear Jack, as your oldest friend (except Burt), and you must allow me the privilege of an old friend. I have more than I want, and I propose to make your allowance at Oxford to 80*l.* a year, and upon that I think you may manage to get on. Now, it will not be quite candid, but I think, under the circumstances, we shall be justified in representing to your father that 40*l.* a year will be ample for him to allow you. You see what I mean?

"I remember almost word for word what the Vicar said; for it is not often in one's life that one meets with this sort of friend. At first I thanked him, but refused to take anything from him. I had saved enough, I said, to carry me through Oxford. But he would not be put off; and I found that his heart was as much set on making me an allowance himself as on saving my father. So I agreed to take 25*l.* a year from him.

"When we met again in the evening, to hear my father's statement, it was as good as a play to see the dear old man, with his spectacles on and his papers before him, proving in some wonderful way that he could easily allow me at least 80*l.* or 100*l.* a year. I believe it cost the Vicar some twinges of conscience to persuade that all I should want would be 40*l.* a year; and it was very hard work; but at last we succeeded, and it was so settled. During the next

three weeks the preparations for my start occupied us all. The Vicar looked out all the classics, which he insisted that I should take. There they stand on that middle shelf—all well bound, you see, and many of them old college prizes. My father made an expedition to the nearest town, and came back with a large new portmanteau and hat-box; and the next day the leading tailor came over to fit me out with new clothes. In fact, if I had not resisted stoutly, I should have come to college with half the contents of the cottage, and Burt as valet; for the old boatswain was as bad as the other two. But I compromised the matter with him by accepting his pocket compass and the picture of the brig which hangs there; the two things, next to his wife, which he values, I believe, most in the world.

"Well, it is now two years last October since I came to Oxford as a servitor; so you see I have pretty nearly finished my time here. I was more than twenty then—much older as you know, than most freshmen. I daresay it was partly owing to the difference in age, and partly to the fact that I knew no one when I came up, but mostly to my own bad management and odd temper, that I did not get on better than I have done with the men here. Sometimes I think that our college is a bad specimen, for I have made several friends amongst out-college men. At any rate, the fact is, as you have no doubt found out—and I hope I haven't tried at all to conceal it—that I am out of the pale, as it were. In fact, with the exception of one of the tutors, and one man who was a freshman with me, I do not know a man in college except as a mere speaking acquaintance.

"I had been rather thrown off my balance, I think, at the change in my life, for at first I made a great fool of myself. I had believed too readily what my father had said, and thought that at Oxford I should see no more of what I had been used to. Here I thought that the last thing a man would be valued by would be the length of his purse, and that no one would look down upon me because I performed some services to the college in return for my keep, instead of paying for it in money.

"Yes, I made a great fool of myself, no doubt of that; and, what is worse, I broke my promise to my father—I often *was* ashamed of my poverty, and tried at first to hide it, for somehow the spirit of the place carried me along with it. I couldn't help wishing to be thought of and treated as an equal by the men. It's a very bitter thing for

a proud, shy, sensitive fellow, as I am by nature, to have to bear the sort of assumption and insolence one meets with. I furnished my rooms well, and dressed well. Ah! you stare; but this is not the furniture I started with; I sold it all when I came to my senses, and put in this tumble-down second-hand stuff, and I have worn out my fine clothes. I know I'm not well dressed now. (Tom nodded ready acquiescence to this position.) Yes, though I still wince a little now and then—a great deal oftener than I like—I don't carry any false colors. I can't quite conquer the feeling of shame (for shame it is, I am afraid), but at any rate I don't try to hide my poverty any longer, I haven't for these eighteen months. I have a grim sort of pleasure in pushing it in everybody's face. (Tom assented with a smile, remembering how excessively uncomfortable Hardy had made him by this little peculiarity the first time he was in his rooms.) The first thing which opened my eyes a little was the conduct of the tradesmen. My bills all came in within a week of the delivery of the furniture and clothes; some of them wouldn't leave the things without payment. I was very angry and vexed, not at the bills, for I had my savings, which were more than enough to pay for everything. But I knew that these same tradesmen never thought of asking for payment under a year, oftener two, from other men. Well, it was a lesson. Credit for gentlemen-commoners, ready-money dealings with servitors! I owe the Oxford tradesmen much for that lesson. If they would only treat every man who comes up as a servitor, it would save a deal of misery.

"My cure was completed by much higher folk, though. I can't go through the whole treatment, but will give you a specimen or two of the doses, giving precedence (as is the way here) to those administered by the highest in rank. I got them from all sorts of people, but none did me more good than the lords' pills. Amongst other ways of getting on I took to sparring, which was then very much in vogue. I am a good hand at it, and very fond of it, so that it wasn't altogether flunkeyism, I'm glad to think. In my second term two or three fighting men came down from London, and gave a benefit at the Weirs. I was there, and set to with one of them. We were well matched, and both of us did our very best; and when we had had our turn we drew down the house, as they say. Several young tufts and others of the faster men came up to me afterwards and com-

plimented me. They did the same by the professional, but it didn't occur to me at the time that they put us both in the same catagory.

"I am free to own that I was really pleased two days afterwards, when a most elaborate flunkey brought a card to my door inscribed 'The Viscount Philippine, Ch. Ch., at home to-night, eight o'clock—sparring.' Luckily, I made a light dinner, and went sharp to time into Christ Church. The porter directed me to the noble Viscount's rooms; they were most splendid, certainly—first-floor rooms in Peckwater. I was shown into the large room, which was magnificently furnished and lighted. A good space was cleared in the centre; there were all sorts of bottles and glasses on the sideboard. There might have been twelve or fourteen men present, almost all in tufts or gentlemen-commoners' caps. One or two of our college I recognized. The fighting man was also there, stripped for sparring, which none of the rest were. It was plain that the sport had not begun; I think he was doing some trick of strength as I came in. My noble host came forward with a nod, and asked me if I would take anything, and when I declined, said, 'Then will you put on the gloves?' I looked at him, rather surprised, and thought it an odd way to treat the only stranger in his rooms. However, I stripped, put on the gloves, and one of the others came forward to tie them for me. While he was doing it I heard my host say to the man, 'A five-pound note, mind, if you do it within the quarter-of-an-hour.' 'Only half-minute time, then, my lord,' he answered. The man who was tying my gloves said, 'Be steady; don't give him a chance to knock you down.' It flashed across me in a moment now why I was there; but it was too late to draw back, so we stood up and began sparring. I played very steadily and light at first to see whether my suspicions were well founded, and in two minutes I was satisfied. My opponent tried every dodge to bring on a rally, and when he was foiled I could see that he was shifting his glove. I stopped and insisted that his gloves should be tied, and then we went on again.

"I kept on the defensive. The man was in bad training, and luckily I had the advantage by an inch or so in length of arm. Before five minutes was over, I had caught enough of the bystander's remarks to know that my noble host had betted a pony that I should be knocked down in a quarter-

of-an-hour. My one object now was to make him lose his money. My opponent did his utmost for his patron, and fairly winded himself in his efforts to get at me. He had to call time twice himself. I said not a word; my time would come I knew, if I could keep on my legs, and of this I had little fear. I held myself together, made no attack, and my length of arm gave me the advantage in every counter. It was all I could do, though, to keep clear of his rushes as the time drew on. On he came time after time, careless of guarding, and he was full as good a man as I. 'Time's up; it's past the quarter.' 'No, by Jove, half a minute yet; now's your time,' said my noble host to his man, who answered by a rush. I met him as before with a steady counter, but this time my blow got home under his chin, and he staggered, lost his footing, and went fairly over on his back.

"Most of the bystanders seemed delighted, and some of them hurried towards me. But I tore off the gloves, flung them on the ground, and turned to my host. I could hardly speak, but I made an effort, and said quietly, 'You have brought a stranger to your rooms, and have tried to make him fight for your amusement; now I tell you it is a blackguard act of yours—an act which no gentleman would have done. 'My noble host made no remark. I threw on my waist-coat, and then turned to the rest and said, '*Gentlemen* would not have stood by and seen it done.' I went up to the side-board, uncorked a bottle of champagne, and half filled a tumbler, before a word was spoken. Then one of the visitors stepped forward and said, 'Mr. Hardy, I hope you won't go, there has been a mistake; we did not know of this. I am sure many of us are very sorry for what has occured; stay and look on, we will all of us spar.' I looked at him, and then at my host, to see whether the latter joined in the apology. Not he, he was doing the dignified sulky, and most of the rest seemed to me to be with him. 'Will any of you spar with me?' I said, tauntingly, tossing off the champagne. 'Certainly,' the new speaker said directly, 'if you wish it, and are not too tired, I will spar with you myself; you will, won't you, James?' and he turned to one of the other men. If any of them had backed him by a word I should probably have stayed. Several of them, I learnt afterwards, would have liked to have done so, bnt it was an awkward scene to interfere in. I stopped a moment, and then said, with a sneer,

'You're too small, and none of the other gentlemen seem inclined to offer.'

"I saw that I had hurt him, and felt pleased at the moment I had done so. I was now ready to start, and I could not think of anything more unpleasant to say at the moment; so I went up to my antagonist, who was standing with the gloves on still, not quite knowing what to be at, and held out my hand. 'I can shake hands with you at any rate,' I said; 'you only did what you were paid for in the regular way of business, and you did your best.' He looked rather sheepish, but held out his gloved hand, which I shook. 'Now, I have the honor to wish you all a very good evening;' and so I left the place and got home to my own rooms, and sat down there with several new ideas in my head. On the whole, the lesson was not a very bitter one, for I felt that I had had the best of the game. The only thing I really was sorry for was my own insolence to the man who had come forward as a peacemaker. I had remarked his face before. I don't know how it is with you, but I can never help looking at a tuft—the gold tassel draws one's eye somehow; and then it's an awful position, after all, for mere boys to be placed in. So I knew his face before that day, though I had only seen him two or three times in the street. Now it was much more clearly impressed on my mind; and I called it up and looked it over, half hoping that I should detect something to justify me to myself, but without success. However, I got the whole affair pretty well out of my head by bedtime.

"While I was at breakfast the next morning, my scout came in with a face of the most ludicrous importance, and quite a deferental manner. I declare I don't think he has ever got back since that day to his original free-and-easy swagger. He laid a card on my table, paused a moment, and then said, 'His ludship is houtside watin', sir.'

"I had had enough of lords' cards; and the scene of yesterday rose painfully before me as I threw the card into the fire without looking at it, and said, 'Tell him I am engaged.'

"My scout, with something like a shudder at my audacity, replied, 'His ludship told me to say, sir, as his bis'ness was very particular, so hif you was engaged he would call again in 'arf an hour.'

"'Tell him to come in, then, if he won't take a civil hint.' I felt sure who it would be, but hardly knew whether

to be pleased or annoyed, when in another minute the door opened, and in walked the peacemaker. I don't know which of us was most embarrassed; he walked straight up to me without lifting his eyes, and held out his hand, saying, 'I hope, Mr. Hardy, you will shake hands with me now.'

"'Certainly, my lord,' I said, taking his hand; 'I am sorry for what I said to you yesterday, when my blood was up.'

"'You said no more than we deserved,' he answered, twirling his cap by the long gold tassel; 'I could not be comfortable without coming to assure you again myself, that neither I, nor, I believe, half the men in Philippine's rooms yesterday, knew anything of the bet. I really cannot tell you how annoyed I have been about it.'

"I assured him that he might make himself quite easy, and then remained standing, expecting him to go, and not knowing exactly what to say further. But he begged me to go on with my breakfast, and sat down, and then asked me to give him a cup of tea, as he had not breakfasted. So in a few minutes we were sitting opposite one another over tea and bread and butter, for he didn't ask for, and I didn't offer, anything else. It was rather a trying meal, for each of us was doing all he could to make out the other. I only hope I was as pleasant as he was. After breakfast he went, and I thought the acquaintance was probably at an end; he had done all that a gentleman need have done, and had well-nigh healed a raw place in my mental skin.

"But I was mistaken. Without intruding himself on me, he managed somehow or another to keep on building up the acquaintance little by little. For some time I looked out very jealously for any patronizing airs, and even after I was convinced that he had nothing of the sort in him, avoided him as much as I could, though he was the most pleasant and best-informed man I knew. However, we became intimate, and I saw a good deal of him, in a quiet way, at his own rooms. I wouldn't go to his parties, and asked him not to come to me here, for my horror of being thought a tuft-hunter had become almost a disease. He was not so old as I, but he was just leaving the University, for he had come up early, and lord's sons are allowed to go out in two years;—I suppose because the authorities think they will do less harm here in two than three years; but it is sometimes hard on poor men, who have to

earn their bread, to see such a privilege given to those who want it least. When he left, he made me promise to go and pay him a visit—which I did in the long vacation, at a splendid place up in the North, and enjoyed myself more than I care to own. His father, who is quite worthy of his son, and all his family, were as kind as people could be.

"Well, amongst other folks I met there a young sprig of nobility who was coming up here the next term. He had been brought up abroad, and, I suppose, knew very few men of his own age in England. He was not a bad style of boy, but rather too demonstrative, and not strong-headed. He took to me wonderfully, was delighted to hear that I was up at Oxford, and talked constantly of how much we should see of one another. As it happened, I was almost the first man he met when he got off the coach at the 'Angel,' at the beginning of his first term. He almost embraced me, and nothing would serve but I must dine with him at the inn, and we spent the evening together, and parted dear friends. Two days afterwards we met in the street; he was with two other youngsters, and gave me a polished and distant bow; in another week he passed me as if we had never met.

"I don't blame him, poor boy. My only wonder is, that any of them ever get through this place without being thoroughly spoilt. From Vice-Chancellor down to scout's boy, the whole of Oxford seems to be in league to turn their boys heads, even if they come up with them set on straight, which toadying servants at home take care shall never happen if they can hinder it. The only men who would do them good up here, both dons and undergraduates, keep out of their way, very naturally. Gentlemen-commoners have a little better chance, though not much, and seem to me to be worse than the tufts, and to furnish most of their toadies.

"Well, you are tired of my railing? I daresay I am rabid about it all. Only it does go to my heart to think what this place might be, and what it is. I see I needn't give you any more of my experience.

"You'll understand now some of the things that have puzzled you about me. Oh! I know they did; you needn't look apologetic. I don't wonder, or blame you. I am a very queer bird for the perch I have lit on; I know that as well as anybody. The only wonder is that you ever took

the trouble to try to lime me. Now have another glass of toddy. Why! it is near twelve. I must have one pipe and turn in. No Aristophanes to-night."

CHAPTER IX.

"A BROWN BAIT."

TOM'S little exaltation in his own eyes consequent on the cupboard-smashing escapade of his friend was not to last long. Not a week had elapsed before he himself arrived suddenly in Hardy's room in as furious a state of mind as the other had so lately been in, allowing for the difference of the men. Hardy looked up from his books and exclaimed:—

"What's the matter? Where have you been to-night? You look fierce enough to sit for a portrait of Sanguinoso Volcanoni, the bandit."

"Been!" said Tom, sitting down on the spare Windsor chair, which he usually occupied, so hard as to make it crack again; "been! I've been to a wine party at Hendon's. Do you know any of that set?"

"No, except Grey, who came into residence in the same term with me; we have been reading for degree together. You must have seen him here sometimes in the evenings."

"Yes, I remember; the fellow with a stiff neck, who won't look you in the face."

"Ay, but he is a sterling man at the bottom, I can tell you."

"Well, he wasn't there. You don't know any of the rest?"

"No."

"And never went to any of their parties?"

"No."

"You've had no loss, I can tell you," said Tom, pleased that the ground was clear for him. "I never was amongst such a set of waspish, dogmatical, over-bearing fellows in my life."

"Why, what in the name of fortune have they been doing to you? How did you fall among such Philistines?"

"I'm such an easy fool, you see," said Tom, "I go off directly with any fellow that asks me; fast or slow, it's all the same. I never think twice about the matter, and generally, I like all the fellows I meet, and enjoy everything. But just catch me at another of their stuck-up wines, that's all."

"But you won't tell me what's the matter."

"Well, I don't know why Hendon should have asked me. He can't think me a likely card for a convert, I should think. At any rate, he asked me to wine, and I went as usual. Everything was in capital style (it don't seem to be any part of their creed, mind you, to drink bad wine), and awfully gentlemanly and decorous."

"Yes, that's aggravating, I admit. It would have been in better taste, of course, if they had been a little blackguard and indecorous. No doubt, too, one has a right to expect bad wine at Oxford. Well?"

Hardy spoke so gravely, that Tom had to look across at him for half a minute to see whether he was in earnest. Then he went on with a grin.

"There was a piano in one corner, and muslin curtains—I give you my word, muslin curtains, besides the stuff ones."

"You don't say so," said Hardy; "put up, no doubt, to insult you. No wonder you looked so furious when you came in. Anything else?"

"Let me see—yes—I counted three sorts of scents on the mantel-piece, besides Eau-de-Cologne. But I could have stood it well enough if it hadn't been for their talk. From one thing to another they got to cathedrals, and one of them called St. Paul's 'a disgrace to a Christian city.' I couldn't stand that, you know. I was always bred to respect St. Paul's; weren't you?"

"My education in that line was neglected," said Hardy, gravely. "And so you took up the cudgels for St. Paul's?"

"Yes, I plumped out that St. Paul's was the finest cathedral in England. You'd have thought I had said that lying was one of the cardinal virtues—one or two just treated me to a sort of pitying sneer, but my neighbors were down upon me with a vengeance. I stuck to my text though, and they drove me into saying I liked the Ratcliffe more than any building in Oxford; which I don't believe I do, now I come to think of it. So when they couldn't get me to budge for their talk, they took to telling me that everybody that knew anything about church architecture was against me—

of course meaning that I knew nothing about it—for the matter of that, I don't mean to say that I do"—Tom paused; it had suddenly occurred to him that there might be some reason in the rough handling he had got.

"But what did you say to the authorities?" said Hardy, who was greatly amused.

"Said I didn't care a straw for them," said Tom; "there was no right or wrong in the matter, and I had as good a right to my opinion as Pugin—or whatever his name is—and the rest."

"What heresy!" said Hardy, laughing; "you caught it for that, I suppose?"

"Didn't I! They made such a noise over it, that the men at the other end of the table stopped talking (they were all freshmen at our end), and when they found what was up, one of the older ones took me in hand, and I got a lecture about the middle ages, and the monks. I said I thought England was well rid of the monks; and then we got on to Protestantism, and fasting, and apostolic succession, and passive obedience, and I don't know what all! I only know I was tired enough of it before the coffee came; but I couldn't go, you know, with all of them on me at once, could I?"

"Of course not; you were like the 6,000 unconquerable British infantry at Albuera. You held your position by sheer fighting, suffering fearful loss."

"Well, said Tom, laughing, for he had talked himself into good humor again. "I dare say I talked a deal of nonsense; and, when I come to think it over, a good deal of what some of them said had something in it. I should like to hear it again quietly; but there were others sneering and giving themselves airs, but that puts a fellow's back up."

"Yes," said Hardy, "a good many of the weakest and vainest men who come up take to this sort of thing now. They can do nothing themselves, and get a sort of platform by going in on the High Church business from which to look down on their neighbors."

"That's just what I thought," said Tom; "they tried to push mother Church, mother Church, down my throat at every turn. I'm as fond of the Church as any of them, but I don't want to be jumping up on her back every minute, like a sickly chicken getting on the old hen's back to warm its feet whenever the ground is cold, and fancying himself taller than all the rest of the brood."

"You were unlucky," said Hardy; "there are some very fine fellows amongst them."

"Well, I havn't seen much of them," said Tom, "and I don't want to see any more, for it seems to be all Gothic-mouldings and man-millinery business."

"You won't think so when you've been up a little longer." said Hardy, getting up to make tea, which operation he had hardly commenced, when a knock came at the door, and in answer to Hardy's "Come in," a slight, shy man appeared, who hesitated, and seemed inclined to go when he saw that Hardy was not alone.

"Oh, come in, and have a cup of tea, Grey. You know Brown, I think?" said Hardy, looking round from the fire, where he was filling his teapot, to watch Tom's reception of the new comer.

Our hero took his feet down, drew himself up and made a solemn bow, which Grey returned, and then slid nervously into a chair and looked very uncomfortable. However, in another minute Hardy came to the rescue and began pouring out the tea. He was evidently tickled at the idea of confronting Tom so soon with another of his enemies. Tom saw this, and put on a cool and majestic manner in consequence, which evidently increased the discomfort of Grey's seat, and kept Hardy on the edge of an abyss of laughter. In fact, he had to ease himself by talking of indifferent matters and laughing at nothing. Tom had never seen him in this sort of humor before, and couldn't help enjoying it, though he felt that it was partly at his own expense. But when Hardy once just approached the subject of the wine party, Tom bristled up so quickly, and Grey looked so meekly wretched, though he knew nothing of what was coming, that Hardy suddenly changed the subject, and turning to Grey, said—

"What have you been doing the last fortnight? You haven't been here once. I've been obliged to get on with my Aristotle without you."

"I'm very sorry indeed, but I haven't been able to come," said Grey, looking sideways at Hardy, and then at Tom, who sat regarding the wall, supremely indifferent.

"Well, I've finished my Ethics," said Hardy; "can't you come in to-morrow night to talk them over? I suppose you're through them too?"

"No, really," said Grey. "I haven't been able to look at them since the last time I was here."

"You must take care," said Hardy. "The new examiners are all for science and history; it won't do for you to go in trusting to your scholarship."

"I hope to make it up in the Easter vacation," said Grey.

"You'll have enough to do then," said Hardy; "but how is it you've dropped astern so?"

"Why, the fact is," said Grey, hesitatingly, "that the curate of St. Peter's has set up some night schools, and wanted some help. So I have been doing what I could to help him; and really," looking at his watch, "I must be going. I only wanted to tell you how it was I didn't come now."

Hardy looked at Tom, who was rather taken aback by this announcement, and began to look less haughtily at the wall. He even condescended to take a short glance at his neighbor.

"It's unlucky," said Hardy; "but do you teach every night?"

"Yes," said Grey. "I used to do my science and history at night, you know; but I find that teaching takes so much out of me, that I'm only fit for bed now, when I get back. I'm so glad I've told you. I have wanted to do it for some time. And if you would let me come in for an hour, directly after hall, instead of later, I think I could still manage that."

"Of course," said Hardy, "come when you like. But it's rather hard to take you away every night, so near the examinations."

"It is my own wish," said Grey. "I should have been very glad if it hadn't happened just now; but as it has I must do the best I can."

"Well, but I should like to help you. Can't I take a night or two off your hands?"

"No!" said Tom, fired with sudden enthusiasm; "it will be as bad for you, Hardy. It can't want much scholarship to teach there. Let me go. I'll take two nights a week, if you'll let me."

"Oh, thank you," said Grey; "but I don't know how my friend might like it. That is—I mean," he said, getting very red, "it's very kind of you, only I'm used to it; and—and they rely on me. But I really must go—good night;" and Grey went off in confusion.

As soon as the door had fairly closed, Hardy could stand it no longer, and lay back in his chair laughing till the tears

ran down his cheeks. Tom, wholly unable to appreciate the joke, sat looking at him with perfect gravity.

"What can there be in your look, Brown," said Hardy, when he could speak again, "to frighten Grey so? Did you see what a fright he was in at once, at the idea of turning you into the night schools? There must be some lurking Protestantism in your face somewhere, which I hadn't detected."

"I don't believe he was frightened at me a bit. He wouldn't have you either, remember," said Tom.

"Well, at any rate, that doesn't look as if it were all mere Gothic-mouldings and man-millinery, does it?" said Hardy.

Tom sipped his tea, and considered.

"One can't help admiring him, do you know, for it," he said. "Do you think he is really thrown back, now, in his own reading by this teaching?"

"I'm sure of it. He is such a quiet fellow, that nothing else is likely to draw him off reading; I can see that he doesn't get on as he used, day by day. Unless he makes it up somehow, he won't get his first."

"He don't seem to like the teaching work much," said Tom.

"Not at all, so far as I can see."

"Then it is a very fine thing of him," said Tom.

"And you retract your man-millinery dictum, so far as he is concerned?"

"Yes, that I do, heartily; but not as to the set in general."

"Well, they don't suit me either; but, on the whole, they are wanted—at any rate, in this college. Even the worst of them is making some sort of protest for self-denial, and against self-indulgence, which is nowhere more needed than here."

"A nice sort of protest—muslin curtains, a piano, and old claret."

"Oh, you've no right to count Henden among them; he has only a little hankering after mediævalism, and thinks the whole thing gentlemanly."

"I only know the whole clamjamfery of them were there, and didn't seem to protest much."

"Brown, you're a bigot. I should never have thought you would have been so furious against any set of fellows. I begin to smell Arnold."

"No you don't. He never spoke to me against anybody."

"Hallo! It was the Rugby atmosphere, then, I suppose. But I tell you they are the only men in the college who are making that protest, whatever their motives may be."

"What do you say to yourself, old fellow?"

"Nonsense! I never deny myself any pleasure that I can afford, if it isn't wrong in itself, and doesn't hinder anyone else. I can tell you I am as fond of fine things and good living as you."

"*If* a thing isn't wrong, and you can afford it, and it doesn't hurt anybody! Just so; well, then, musn't it be right for you to have? You wouldn't have it put under your nose, I suppose, just for you to smell at, and let it alone?"

"Yes, I know all that. I've been over it often enough, and there's truth in it. But, mind you, it's rather slippery ground, especially for a freshman; and there's a good deal to be said on the other side—I mean, for denying oneself just for the sake of the self denial."

"Well, they don't deny themselves the pleasure of looking at a fellow as if he were a Turk, because he likes St. Paul's better than Westminster Abbey."

"How that snubbing you got at the Ecclesiological wine party seems to wrankle.—There now! don't bristle up like a hedgehog. I'll never mention that unfortunate wine again. I saw the eight come in to-day. You were keeping much better time, but there is a weak place or two forward."

"Yes," said Tom, delighted to change the subject, "I find it awfully hard to pull up to Jervis's stroke. Do you think I shall ever get to it?"

"Of course you will. Why you have only been pulling behind him a dozen times or so, and his is the most trying stroke on the river. You quicken a little on it; but I didn't mean you. Two and five are the blots in the boat."

"You think so?" said Tom, much relieved. "So does Miller, I can see. It's so provoking—Drysdale is to pull two in the races next term, and Blake seven, and then Diogenes will go to five. He's obliged to pull seven now, because Blake won't come down this term; no more will Drysdale. They say there will be plenty of time after Easter."

"It's a great pity," said Hardy.

"Isn't it," said Tom; "and it makes Miller so savage.

He walks into us all as if it were our faults. Do you think he's a good coxswain?"

"First-rate on most points, but rather too sharp-tongued. You can't get a man's best out of him without a little praise."

"Yes, that just it; he puts one's back up," said Tom. "But the Captain is a splendid fellow, isn't he?"

"Yes, but a little too easy, at least with men like Blake and Drysdale. He ought to make them train, or turn them out."

"But who could he get? There's nobody else. If you would pull, now—why shouldn't you? I'm sure it would make us all right."

"I don't subscribe to the club," said Hardy; "I wish I had, for I should have liked to have pulled with you, and behind Jervis this year."

"Do let me tell the Captain," said Tom; "I'm sure he'd manage it somehow."

"I'm afraid it's too late," said Hardy; "I cut myself off from everything of the sort two years ago, and I'm beginning to think I was a fool for my pains."

Nothing more was said on the subject at the time, but Tom went away in great spirits at having drawn this confession out of Hardy—the more so, perhaps, because he flattered himself that he had something to say to the change in his friend.

CHAPTER X.

SUMMER TERM.

How many spots in life are there which will bear comparison with the beginning of our second term at the University? So far as external circumstances are concerned, it seems hard to know what a man could find to ask for at that period of his life, if a fairy godmother were to alight in his rooms and offer him the usual three wishes. The sailor who had asked for "all the grog in the world," and "all the baccy in the world," was indeed driven to "a little more baccy" as his third requisition; but, at any rate his two first requisitions were to some extent grounded on

what he held to be substantial wants; he felt himself actually limited in the matters of grog and tobacco. The condition which Jack would have been in as a wisher, if he had been started on his quest with the assurance that his utmost desires in the direction of alcohol and narcotic were already provided for, and must be left out of the question, is the only one affording a pretty exact parallel to the case we are considering. In our second term we are no longer freshmen, and begin to feel ourselves at home, while both "smalls" and "greats" are sufficiently distant to be altogether ignored if we are that way inclined, or to be looked forward to with confidence that the game is in our own hands if we are reading men. Our financial position—unless we have exercised rare ingenuity in involving ourselves—is all that heart can desire; we have ample allowances paid in quarterly to the University bankers without thought or trouble of ours, and our credit is at its zenith. It is a part of our recognized duty to repay the hospitality we have received as freshmen; and all men will be sure to come to our first parties to see how we do the thing; it will be our own faults if we do not keep them in future. We have not had time to injure our characters to any material extent with the authorities of our own college, or of the University. Our spirits are never likely to be higher, or our digestions better. These and many other comforts and advantages environ the fortunate youth returning to Oxford after his first vacation; thrice fortunate, however, if, as happened in our hero's case, it is Easter term to which he is returning; for that Easter term, with the four days' vacation, and the little Trinity term at the end of it, is surely the cream of the Oxford year. Then, even in this our stern northern climate, the sun is beginning to have power, the days have lengthened out, great-coats are unnecessary at morning chapel, and the miseries of numbed hands and shivering skins no longer accompany every pull on the river and canter on Bullingdon. In Christ Church meadows and the college gardens the birds are making sweet music in the tall elms. You may almost hear the thick grass growing, and the buds on tree and shrub are changing from brown, red, or purple, to emerald green under your eyes; the glorious old city is putting on her best looks, and bursting into laughter and song. In a few weeks the races begin, and Cowley marsh will be alive with white tents and joyous cricketers. A quick ear, on the towing-path by the Gut, may feast at one

time on those three sweet sounds, the thud thud of the eight-oar, the crack of the rifles at the Weirs, and the click of the bat on the Magdalen ground. And then Commemoration rises in the background, with its clouds of fair visitors, and visions of excursions to Woodstock and Nuneham in the summer days—of windows open on to the old quadrangles in the long still evenings, through which silver laughter and strains of sweet music, not made by man, steal out and puzzle the old celibate jackdaws, peering down from the battlements with heads on one side. To crown all, long vacation, beginning with the run to Henley regatta, or up to town to see the match with Cambridge at Lord's, and taste some of the sweets of the season, before starting on some pleasure tour or reading party, or dropping back into the quiet pleasures of English country life! Surely, the lot of young Englishmen who frequent our universities is cast in pleasant places. The country has a right to expect something from those for whom she finds such a life as this in the years when enjoyment is keenest.

Tom was certainly alive to the advantages of the situation, and entered on his kingdom without any kind of scruple. He was very glad to find things so pleasant, and quiet resolved to make the best he could of them. Then he was in a particularly good humor with himself; for, in deference to the advice of Hardy, he had actually fixed on the books which he should send in for his little-go examination before going down for the Easter vacation, and had read them through at home, devoting an hour or two almost daily to this laudable occupation. So he felt himself entitled to take things easily on his return. He had brought back with him two large hampers of good sound wine, a gift from his father, who had a horror of letting his son set before his friends the fire-water which is generally sold to the undergraduate. Tom found that his father's notions of the rate of consumption prevalent in the university were wild in the extreme. "In his time," the squire said, "eleven men came to his first wine party, and he had opened nineteen bottles of port for them. He was very glad to hear that the habits of the place had changed so much for the better; and as Tom wouldn't want nearly so much wine, he should have it out of an older bin." Accordingly the port which Tom employed the first hour after his return in stacking carefully away in his cellar, had been more than twelve years in bottle, and he thought with unmixed satisfaction of the pleasing effect it

would have on Jervis and Miller, and the one or two other men who knew good wine from bad, and guided public opinion on the subject, and of the social importance which he would soon attain from the reputation of giving good wine.

The idea of entertaining, of being hospitable, is a pleasant and fascinating one to most young men; but the act soon gets to be a bore to all but a few curiously constituted individuals. With these hospitality becomes first a passion and then a faith—a faith the practice of which, in the cases of some of its professors, reminds one strongly of the hints on such subjects scattered about the New Testament. Most of us feel, when our friends leave us, a certain sort of satisfaction, not unlike that of paying a bill; they have been done for, and can't expect anything more for a long time. Such thoughts never occur to your really hospitable man. Long years of narrow means cannot hinder him from keeping open house for whoever wants to come to him, and setting the best of everything before all comers. He has no notion of giving you anything but the best he can command if it be only fresh porter from the nearest mews. He asks himself not, "Ought I to invite A or B? do I owe him anything?" but, "Would A or B like to come here?" Give me these men's houses for real enjoyment, though you never get anything very choice there,—(how can a man produce old wine who gives his oldest every day?)—seldom much elbow room or orderly arrangement. The high arts of gastronomy and scientific drinking so much valued in our highly civilized community, are wholly unheeded by him, are altogether above him, are cultivated in fact by quite another set, who have very little of the genuine spirit of hospitality in them, from whose tables, should one by chance happen upon them, one rises, certainly with a feeling of satisfaction and expansion, chiefly physical, but entirely without the expansion of heart which one gets at the scramble of the hospitable man So that we are driven to remark, even in such every-day matters as these, but it is the invisible, the spiritual, which after all gives value and reality even to dinners; and, with Solomon, to prefer the most touching *dinér Russe*, the dinner of herbs where love is, though I trust that neither we nor Solomon should object to well-dressed cutlets with our salad, if they happened to be going.

Readers will scarcely need to be told that one of the first things Tom did, after depositing his luggage and unpacking

his wine, was to call at Hardy's rooms, where he found his friend deep as usual in his books, the hard-worked atlases and dictionaries of all sorts taking up more space than ever. After the first hearty greeting, Tom occupied his old place with much satisfaction.

"How long have you been up, old fellow?" he began; "you look quite settled."

"I only went home for a week. Well, what have you been doing in the vacation?"

"Oh, there was nothing much going on; so, amongst other things, I've nearly floored my little-go work."

"Bravo! you'll find the comfort of it now. I hardly thought you would take to the grind so easily."

"It's pleasant enough for a spurt," said Tom; "but I shall never manage a horrid perpetual grind like yours. But what in the world have you been doing to your walls?"

Tom might well ask, for the corners of Hardy's room were covered with sheets of paper of different sizes, pasted against the wall in groups. In the line of sight, from about the height of four to six feet, there was scarcely an inch of the original paper visible, and round each centre group there were outlying patches and streamers, stretching towards floor or ceiling, or away nearly to the bookcases or fireplace.

"Well, don't you think it is a great improvement on the old paper?" said Hardy. "I shall be out of rooms next term, and it will be a hint to the College that the rooms want papering. You're no judge of such matters, or I should ask you whether you don't see great artistic taste in the arrangement."

"Why, they're nothing but maps, and lists of names and dates," said Tom, who had got up to examine the decorations. "And what in the world are all these queer pins for?" he went on, pulling a strong pin with a large red sealing-wax head out of the map nearest to him.

"Hullo! take care there, what are you about?" shouted Hardy, getting up and hastening to the corner. "Why, you irreverent beggar, those pins are the famous statesmen and warriors of Greece and Rome."

"Oh, I beg your pardon; I didn't know I was in such august company;" saying which, Tom proceeded to stick the red-headed pin back in the wall.

"Now, just look at that," said Hardy, taking the pin out from the place where Tom had stuck it. "Pretty doings

there would be amongst them with your management. This pin is Brasidas; you've taken him away from Naupactus, where he was watching the eleven Athenian galleys anchored under the temple of Apollo, and struck him down right in the middle of the Pnyx, where he will be instantly torn in pieces by a ruthless and reckless mob. You call yourself a Tory indeed! However, 'twas always the same with you Tories; calculating, cruel, and jealous. Use your leaders up, and throw them over—that's the golden rule of aristocracies."

"Hang Brasidas," said Tom, laughing; "stick him back at Naupactus again. Here, which is Cleon? The scoundrel! give me hold of him, and I'll put him in a hot berth."

"That's he, with the yellow head. Let him alone, I tell you, or all will be hopeless confusion when Grey comes for his lecture. We're only in the third year of the war."

"I like your chaff about Tories sacrificing their great men," said Tom, putting his hands in his pockets to avoid temptation. "How about your precious democracy, old fellow? Which is Socrates?"

"Here, the dear old boy!—this pin with the great grey head, in the middle of Athens, you see. I pride myself on my Athens. Here's the Piræus and the long walls, and the hill of Mars. Isn't it as good as a picture?"

"Well, it *is* better than most maps, I think," said Tom; "but you're not going to slip out so easily. I want to know whether your pet democracy did or did not murder Socrates."

"I'm not bound to defend democracies. But look at my pins. It may be the natural fondness of a parent, but I declare they seem to me to have a great deal of character, considering the material. You'll guess them at once, I'm sure, if you mark the color and shape of the wax. This one now, for instance, who is he?"

"Alcibiades, answered Tom, doubtfully.

"Alcibiades!" shouted Hardy; "you fresh from Rugby, and not know your Thucydides better than that? There's Alcibiades, that little purple-headed, foppish pin, by Socrates. This rusty-colored one is that respectable old stick-in-the-mud, Nicias."

"Well, but you've made Alcibiades nearly the smallest of the whole lot," said Tom.

"So he was, to my mind," said Hardy; "just the sort of insolent young ruffian whom I should have liked to buy at

my price, and sell at his own. He must have been very like some of our gentlemen-commoners, with the addition of brains."

"I should really think, though," said Tom, "it must be a capital plan for making you remember the history."

"It is, I flatter myself. I've long had the idea, but I should never have worked it out and found the value of it but for Grey. I invented it to coach him in his history. You see we are in the Grecian corner. Over there is the Roman. You'll find Livy and Tacitus worked out there, just as Herodotus and Thucydides are here; and the pins are stuck for the Second Punic War, where we are just now, I shouldn't wonder if Grey got his first, after all, he's picking up so quick in my corners; and says he never forgets any set of events when he has picked them out with the pins."

"Is he working at that school still?" asked Tom.

"Yes, as hard as ever. He didn't go down for the vacation, and I really believe it was because the curate told him the school would go wrong if he went away."

"It's very plucky of him, but I do think he's a great fool not to knock it off now till he has passed, don't you?"

"No," said Hardy; "he is getting more good there than he can ever get in the schools, though I hope he'll do well in them too."

"Well, I hope so; for he deserves it. And now, Hardy, to change the subject, I am going to give my first wine next Thursday; and here's the first card which has gone out for it. You'll promise me to come now, won't you?"

"What a hurry you're in." said Hardy, taking the card which he put on his mantel-piece, after examining it.

"But you'll promise to come, now?"

"I'm very hard at work; I can't be sure."

"You needn't stay above half an hour. I've brought back some famous wine from the governor's cellar; and I want so to get you and Jervis together. He is sure to come."

"Why, that's the bell for chapel beginning already," said Hardy; "I had no notion it was so late. I must be off, to put the new servitor up to his work. Will you come in after hall?"

"Yes, if you will come to me next Thursday."

"We'll talk about it. But mind you come to-night; for

you'll find me working Grey in the Punic Wars, and you'll see how the pins act. I'm very proud of my show."

And so Hardy went off to chapel, and Tom to Drysdale's rooms, not at all satisfied that he had made Hardy safe. He found Drysdale lolling on his sofa, as usual, and fondling Jack. He had just arrived, and his servant and the scout were unpacking his portmanteaus. He seemed pleased to see Tom, but looked languid and used up.

"Where have you been this vacation?" said Tom; "you look seedy."

"You may say that," said Drysdale. "Here, Henry, get out a bottle of Schiedam. Have a taste of bitters? there's nothing like it to set one's digestion right."

"No, thank'ee," said Tom, rejecting the glass which Henry proffered him; "my appetite don't want improving."

"You're lucky, then," said Drysdale. "Ah, that's the right stuff! I feel better already."

"But where have you been?"

"Oh, in the little village. It's no use being in the country at this time of year. I just went up to Limmer's, and there I stuck, with two or three more, till to-day."

"I can't stand London for more than a week," said Tom. "What did you do all the day?"

"We hadn't much to say to day-light" said Drysdale. "What with theatres, and sparing-cribs and the Coal-hole and Cider-cellars, and a little play in St. James's Street now and then, one wasn't up to early rising. However, I was better than the rest, for I had generally breakfasted by two o'clock."

"No wonder you look seedy. You'd much better have been in the country."

"I should have been more in pocket, at any rate," said Drysdale. "By Jove, how it runs away with the ready! I'm fairly cleaned out; and if I haven't luck at Van John, I'll be hanged if I know how I'm to get through term. But, look here, here's a bundle of the newest songs—first rate, some of them." And he threw some papers across to Tom, who glanced at them without being at all edified.

"You're going to pull regularly, I hope, this term, Drysdale."

"Yes, I think so; it's cheap amusement, and I want a little training for a change."

"That's all right."

"I've brought down some dresses for our gipsy business, by the way. I didn't forget that. Is Blake back?"

"I don't know," said Tom; "but we sha'n't have time before the races."

"Well, afterwards will do; though the days oughtn't to be too long. I'm all for a little darkness in masquerading."

"There's five o'clock striking. Are you going to dine in hall?"

"No; I shall go to the Mitre, and get a broil."

"Then I'm off. Let's see,—will you come and wine with me next Thursday?"

"Yes; only send us a card, 'to remind.'"

"All right!" said Tom, and went off to hall, feeling dissatisfied and uncomfortable about his fast friend, for whom he had a sincere regard.

After hall, Tom made a short round amongst his acquaintance, and then, giving himself up to the strongest attraction, returned to Hardy's rooms, comforting himself with the thought that it really must be an act of Christian charity to take such a terrible reader off his books for once in a way, when his conscience pricked him for intruding on Hardy during his hours of work. He found Grey there, who was getting up his Roman history, under Hardy's guidance; and the two were working the pins on the maps and lists in the Roman corner when Tom arrived. He begged them not to stop, and very soon was as much interested in what they were doing as if he also were going into the schools in May; for Hardy had a way of throwing life into what he was talking about, and, like many men with strong opinions, and passionate natures, either carried his hearers off their legs and away with him altogether, or aroused every spark of combativeness in them. The latter was the effect which his lecture on the Punic Wars had on Tom. He made several protests as Hardy went on; but Grey's anxious looks kept him from going fairly into action, till Hardy stuck the black pin, which represented Scipio, triumphantly in the middle of Carthage, and, turning round said, "And now for some tea, Grey, before you have to turn out."

Tom opened fire while the tea was brewing.

"You couldn't say anything bad enough about aristocracies this morning, Hardy, and now to-night you are crowing over the success of the heaviest and cruelest oligarchy that ever lived, and praising them up to the skies."

"Hullo! here's a breeze!" said Hardy, smiling; "but I rejoice, O Brown, in that they thrashed the Carthaginians, and not, as you seem to think, in that they being aristocrats, thrashed the Carthaginians; for oligarchs they were not at this time."

"At any rate they answer to the Spartans in the struggle, and the Carthaginians to the Athenians; and yet all your sympathies are with the Romans to-night in the Punic Wars, though they were with the Athenians before dinner."

"I deny your position. The Carthaginians were nothing but a great trading aristocracy—with a glorious family or two I grant you, like that of Hannibal; but, on the whole, a dirty, bargain-driving, buy-cheap-and-sell-dear aristocracy—of whom the world was well rid. They like the Athenians indeed! Why, just look what the two people have left behind them—"

"Yes," interrupted Tom; "but we only know the Carthaginians through the reports of their destroyers. Your heroes trampled them out with hoofs of iron."

"Do you think the Roman hoof could have trampled out their Homer if they ever had one?" said Hardy. "The Romans conquered Greece too, remember."

"But Greece was never so near beating them."

"True. But I hold to my point. Carthage was the mother of all huxters, compassing sea and land to sell her wares."

"And no bad line of life for a nation. At least Englishmen ought to think so."

"No they ought not; at least if 'Punica fides' is to be the rule of trade. Selling any amount of Brummagem wares never did nation or man much good, and never will. Eh, Grey?"

Grey winced at being appealed to, but remarked that he hoped the Church would yet be able to save England from the fate of Tyre or Carthage, the great trading nations of the old world; and then, swallowing his tea, and looking as if he had been caught robbing a henroost, he made a sudden exit, and hurried away out of college to the night-school.

"What a pity he is so odd and shy," said Tom; "I should so like to know more of him."

"It *is* a pity. He is much better when he is alone with me. I think he has heard from some of the set that you

are a furious Protestant, and sees an immense amount of stiff-neckedness in you."

"But about England and Carthage," said Tom, shirking the subject of his own peculiarities; "you don't really think us like them? It gave me a turn to hear you translating 'Punica fides' into Brummagem wares just now."

"I think that successful trade is our rock ahead. The devil who holds new markets and twenty per cent. profits in his gift is the devil that England has most to fear from. 'Because of unrighteous dealings, and riches gotten by deceit the kingdom is translated from one people to another,' said the wise man. Think of that opium war the other day: I don't believe we can get over many more such businesses as that. Grey falls back on the Church, you see, to save the nation; but the Church he dreams of will never do it. Is there any that can? There *must* be surely, or we have believed a lie. But this work of making trade righteous, of Christianizing trade, looks like the very hardest the Gospel has ever had to take in hand—in England at any rate."

Hardy spoke slowly and doubtfully, and paused as if asking for Tom's opinion.

"I never heard it put in that way. I know very little of politics or the state of England. But come, now; the putting down the slave-trade and compensating our planters, *that* shows that we are not sold to the trade devil yet, surely."

"I don't think we are. No, thank God, there are plenty of signs that we are likely to make a good fight of it yet."

They talked together for another hour, drawing their chairs round to the fire, and looking dreamingly into the embers, as is the wont of men who are throwing out suggestions, and helping one another to think, rather than arguing. At the end of that time, Tom left Hardy to his books, and went away laden with several new ideas, one of the clearest of which was that he was awfully ignorant of the contemporary history of his own country, and that it was the thing of all others which he ought to be best informed on, and thinking most about. So, being of an impetuous turn of mind, he went straight to his rooms to commence his new study, where, after diligent hunting, the only food of the kind he required which turned up was the last number of *Bell's Life* from the pocket of his great coat. Upon this he fell to work, in default of anything bet-

ter, and was soon deep in the P. R. column, which was full interesting speculations as to the chances of Bungaree, in his forthcoming campaign against the British middle-weights. By the time he had skimmed through the well-known sheets, he was satisfied that the columns of his old acquaintance were not the place, except in the police reports, where much could be learnt about the present state or future prospects of England. Then, the first evening of term being a restless time, he wandered out again, and before long landed, as his custom was, at Drysdale's door.

On entering the room he found Drysdale and Blake alone together, the former looking more serious than Tom had ever seen him before. As for Blake, the restless, haggard expression sat more heavily than ever on his face, sadly marring its beauty. It was clear that they changed the subject of their talk abruptly on his entrance; so Tom looked anywhere except straight before him as he was greeting Blake. He really felt very sorry for him at the moment. However, in another five minutes, he was in fits of laughter over Blake's description of the conversation between himself and the coachman who had driven the Glo'ster day-mail by which he had come up; in which conversation, nevertheless, when Tom came to think it over, and try to repeat it afterwards, the most facetious parts seemed to be the "sez he's" and the "sez I's" with which Jehu larded his stories; so he gave up the attempt, wondering what he could have found in it to laugh at.

"By the way, Blake," said Drysdale, "how about our excursion into Berkshire masquerading this term? Are you game?"

"Not exactly," said Blake; "I really must make the most of such time as I have left, if I'm going into the schools this term."

"If there's one thing which spoils Oxford, it is those schools," said Drysdale; "they get in the way of everything. I ought to be going up for smalls myself next term, and haven't opened a book yet, and don't mean. Follow a good example, old fellow, you're cock-sure of your first, every body knows."

"I wish everybody would back his opinion, and give me a shade of odds. Why, I have scarcely thought of my history."

"Why the d—l should they make such a fuss about history? One knows perfectly well that those old black

guard heathens were no better than they should be; and what good it can do to lumber one's head with who their grandmothers were, and what they ate, and when and where and why they had their stupid brains knocked out, I can't see for the life of me."

"Excellently well put. Where did you pick up such sound views, Drysdale? But you're not examiner yet; and, on the whole, I must rub up my history somehow. I wish I knew how to do it."

"Can't you put on a coach?" said Drysdale.

"I have one on, but history is my weak point," said Blake.

"I think I can help you," said Tom. "I've just been hearing a lecture in Roman history, and one that won't be so easy to forget as most;" and he went on to explain Hardy's plans, to which Blake listened eagerly.

"Capital!" he said, when Tom had finished. "In whose rooms did you say they are?"

"In Hardy's, and he works at them every night with Grey."

"That's the queer big servitor, his particular pal," put in Drysdale; "there's no accounting for tastes."

"You don't know him," retorted Tom; "and the less you say about him the better."

"I know he wears highlows and short flannels, and—"

"Would you mind asking Hardy to let me come to his lectures?" interrupted Blake, averting the strong language which was rising to Tom's lips. "I think they seem just the things I want. I shouldn't like to offer to pay him, unless you think—"

"I'm quite sure," interrupted Tom, "that he won't take anything. I will ask him to-morrow whether he will let you come, and he is such a kind good fellow that I'm almost sure he will."

"I should like to know your pal, too, Brown," said Drysdale; "you must introduce me, with Blake."

"No, I'll be hanged if I do," said Tom.

"Then I shall introduce myself," said Drysdale; "see if I don't sit next him, now, at your wine on Thursday."

Here Drysdale's scout entered with two notes, and wished to know if Mr. Drysdale would require anything more. Nothing but hot water; he could put the kettle on, Drysdale said, and go; and while the scout was fulfilling his orders, he got up carelessly, whistling, and walking to

the fire, read the notes by the light of one of the candles which were burning on the mantle-piece. Blake was watching him eagerly, and Tom saw this, and made some awkward efforts to go on talking about the advantages of Hardy's plan for learning history. But he was talking to deaf ears, and soon came to a stand still. He saw Drysdale crumple up the notes in his hand and shove them into his pocket. After standing for a few seconds in the same position, with his back to them, he turned around with a careless air, and sauntered to the table where they were sitting.

"Let's see, what were we saying?" he began. "Oh, about your eccentric pal, Brown."

"You've answers from both?" interrupted Blake. Drysdale nodded, and was beginning to speak again to Tom, when Blake got up and said, with white lips, "I *must* see them."

"No, never mind, what does it matter?"

"Matter! by heaven, I must and will see them now."

Tom saw at once that he had better go, and so took up his cap, wished them good night, and went off to his own rooms.

He might have been sitting there for about twenty minutes, when Drysdale entered.

"I couldn't help coming over, Brown," he said, "I must talk to some one, and Blake has gone off raging. I don't know what he'll do—I never was so bothered or savage in my life."

"I am very sorry," said Tom; "he looked very bad in your rooms. Can I do anything?"

"No, but I must talk to some one. You know—no you don't, by the way—but, however, Blake got me out of a tremendous scrape in my first term, and there's nothing that I am not bound to do for him, and wouldn't do if I could. Yes, by George, whatever fellows say of me, they shall never say I didn't stand by a man who stood by me. Well, he owes a dirty 300*l.* or 400*l.* or something of the sort—nothing worth talking of, I know—to people in Oxford, and they have been leading him a dog's life this year and more. Now, he's just going up for his degree, and two or three of these creditors—the most rascally of course—are sueing him in the Vice-Chancellor's Court, thinking now's the time to put the screw on. He will be ruined if they are not stopped somehow. Just after I saw you to-day, he came to me about it. You never saw a fellow in such a

state; I could see it was tearing him to pieces, telling it to me even. However, I soon set him at ease as far as I was concerned; but, as the devil will have it, I can't lend him the money, though 60*l.* would get him over the examination, and then he can make terms. My guardian advanced me 200*l.* beyond my allowance just before Easter, and I haven't 20*l.* left, and the bank here has given me notice not to overdraw any more. However, I thought to settle it easy enough; so I told him to meet me at the Mitre in half an hour for dinner, and when he was gone I sat down and wrote two notes—the first to St. Cloud. That fellow was with us off and on in town, and one night he and I went partners at *roulette*, I finding ready-money for the time, gains and losses to be equally shared in the end. I left the table to go and eat some supper, and he lost 80*l.*, and paid it out of my money. I didn't much care, and he cursed the luck and acknowledged that he owed me 40*l.* at the time. Well, I just reminded him of this 40*l.* and said I should be glad of it (I know he has plenty of money just now), but added, that it might stand if he would join me and Blake in borrowing 60*l.*; I was fool enough to add that Blake was in difficulties, and I was most anxious to help him. As I thought that St. Cloud would probably pay the 40*l.* but do no more, I wrote also to Chanter—heaven knows why, except that the beast rolls in money, and has fawned on me till I've been nearly sick this year past—and asked him to lend Blake 50*l.* on our joint note of hand. Poor Blake! when I told him what I had done at the Mitre, I think I might as well have stuck the carving knife into him. We had a wretched two hours; then you came in, and I got my two answers—here they are."

Tom took the proffered notes, and read:

"DEAR DRYSDALE,—Please explain the allusion in yours to some mysterious 40*l.* I remember perfectly the occurrence to which you refer in another part of your note. You were tired of sitting at the table, and went off to supper, leaving me (not by my own desire) to play for you with your money. I did so, and had abominable luck, as you will remember, for I handed you back a sadly dwindled heap on your return to the table. I hope you are in no row about that night? I shall be quite ready to give evidence of what passed if it will help you in any way. I am always yours very truly,

A. ST. CLOUD.

"P. S. I must decline the little joint operation for Blake's benefit, which you propose."

The second answer ran:

"DEAR DRYSDALE,—I am sorry that I cannot accommodate Mr. Blake, as a friend of yours, but you see his acceptance is mere waste paper, and you cannot give security until you are of age, so if you were to die the money would be lost. Mr. Blake has always carried his head as high as if he had 5,000*l.* a year to spend; perhaps now he will turn less haughty to men who could buy him up easy enough. I remain yours sincerely,

JABEZ CHANTER."

Tom looked up and met Drysdale's eyes, which had more of purpose in them than he had ever seen before. "Fancy poor Blake reading those two notes," he said, "and 'twas I brought them on him. However, he shall have the money somehow to-morrow, if I pawn my watch. I'll be even with those two some day." The two remained in conference for some time longer; it is hardly worth while to do more than relate the result.

At three o'clock the next day, Blake, Drysdale and Tom were in the back parlor of a second-rate inn, in the Cornmarket. On the table were pens and ink, some cases of Eau-de-Cologne and jewelry, and behind it a fat man of forbidding aspect who spent a day or two in each term at Oxford. He held in his thick red damp hand, ornamented as to the fore-finger with a huge ring, a piece of paper.

"Then I shall draw for a hundred-and-five?"

"If you do we won't sign," said Drysdale; "now, be quick, Ben" (the fat man's name was Benjamin), "you infernal shark, we've been wrangling long enough over it. Draw for 100*l.* at three months, or we're off."

"Then, Mr. Drysdale, you gents will take part in goods. I wish to do all I can for gents as comes well introduced, but money is very scarce just now."

"Not a stuffed bird, bottle of Eau de-Cologne, ring or cigar, will we have. So now, no more nonsense, put down 75*l.* on the table."

The money-lender, after another equally useless attempt to move Drysdale, who was the only one of the party who spoke, produced a roll of bills, and counted out 75*l.*, thinking to himself that he would make this young spark sing a different tune before very long. He then filled up the piece

of paper, muttering that the interest was nothing considering the risk, and he hoped they would help him to something better with some of their friends. Drysdale reminded him, in terms not too carefully chosen, that he was getting cent per cent. The document was signed,—Drysdale took the notes, and they went out.

"Well, that's well over," said Drysdale, as they walked towards High Street. "I'm proud of my tactics, I must say; one never does so well for oneself as for any one else. If I had been on my own hook, that fellow would have let me in for 20*l.* worth of stuffed birds and bad jewelry. Let's see, what do you want, Blake?"

"Sixty will do," said Blake.

"You had better take 65*l.*; there'll be some law costs to pay," and Drysdale handed him the notes.

"Now, Brown, shall we divide the balance,—a fiver a piece?"

"No, thank you," said Tom, "I don't want it; as you two are to hold me harmless, you must do what you like with the money." So Drysdale pocketed the 10*l.* after which they walked in silence to the gate of St. Ambrose. The most reckless youngster doesn't begin this sort of thing without reflections which are apt to keep him silent. At the gates Blake wrung both their hands. "I don't say much, but I sha'n't forget it." He got out the words with some diffiulty, and went off to his rooms.

CHAPTER XI.

MUSCULAR CHRISTIANITY.

WITHIN the next week or two several important events had happened to one and another of our St. Ambrose friends. Tom had introduced Blake to Hardy, after some demur on the part of the latter. Blake was his senior by a term; might have called on him any time these three years; why should he want to make his acquaintance now? But when Tom explained to him that it would be a kind thing to let Blake come and coach up his history with him, for that unless he took a high degree in the coming examination, he would

have to leave the college, and probably be ruined for life, Hardy at once consented.

Tom did not venture to inquire for a day or two how the two hit it off together. When he began cautiously to approach the subject, he was glad to find that Hardy liked Blake. "He is a gentleman, and very able," he said; "it is curious to see how quickly he is overhauling Grey, and yet how Grey takes to him. He has never looked scared at him (as he still does at you, by the way) since the first night they met. Blak has the talent of setting people at their ease without saying anything. I shouldn't wonder if Grey thinks he has sound Church notions. It's a dangerous talent, and may make a man very false if he doesn't take care." Tom asked if Blake would be up in his history in time. Hardy thought he might perhaps, but he had a great lee-way to make up. If capacity for taking in cram would do it, he would be all right. He had been well crammed in his science, and had put him (Hardy) up to many dodges which might be useful in the schools, and which you couldn't get without a private tutor.

Then Tom's first wine had gone off most successfully. Jervis and Miller had come early and stayed late, and said all that was handsome of the port, so that he was already a social hero with the boating set. Drysdale, of course, had been there, rattling away to everybody in his reckless fashion, and setting a good example to the two or three fast men whom Tom knew well enough to ask, and who consequently behaved pretty well, and gave themselves no airs, though as they went away together they grumbled slightly that Brown didn't give claret. The rest of the men had shaken together well, and seemed to enjoy themselves. The only drawback to Tom had been that neither Hardy or Grey had appeared. They excused themselves afterwards on the score of reading, but Tom felt aggreved in Hardy's case; he knew that it was only an excuse.

Then the training had begun seriously, Miller had come up specially for the first fortnight, to get them well in hand, as he said. After they were once fairly started, he would have to go down till just before the races; but he thought he might rely on the Captain to keep them up to their work in the interval.

So Miller, the coxswain, took to drawing the bow up to the ear at once. At the very beginning of the term, five or six weeks before the races, the St. Ambrose boat was to be seen

every other day at Abingdon; and early dinners, limitation of liquids and tobacco, and abstinence from late supper parties, pastry, ice, and all manner of trash, likely in Miller's opinion to injure nerve or wind, were hanging over the crew, and already, in fact, to some extent enforced. The Captain shrugged his shoulders, submitted to it all himself and worked away with all imperturbable temper; merely hinting to Miller, in private, that he was going too fast, and that it would be impossible to keep it up. Diogenes highly approved; he would have become the willing slave of any tyranny which should insist that every adult male subject should pull twenty miles, and never imbibe more than a quart of liquid, in the twenty-four hours. Tom was inclined to like it, as it helped him to realize the proud fact that he was actually in the boat. The rest of the crew were in all stages of mutiny, and were only kept from breaking out by their fondness for the Captain and the knowledge that Miller was going in a few days. As it was, Blake was the only one who openly rebelled. Once or twice he stayed away. Miller swore and grumbled, the Captain shook his head, and the crew in general rejoiced.

It is to one of these occasions to which we must now turn. If the usual casual voyager of novels had been standing on Sandford lock, at about four, on the afternoon of April—th, 184 , he might have beheld the St. Ambrose eight-oar coming with a steady swing up the last reach. If such voyager were in the least conversant with the glorious mystery of rowing, he would have felt his heart warm at the magnificent sweep and life of the stroke, and would, on the whole, have been pleased with the performance of the crew generally, considered as a college crew in the early stages of training. They came "hard all" up to the pool below the lock, the coxswain standing in the stern with a tiller-rope in each hand, and then shipped oars; the lock-gates opened, and the boat entered, and in another minute or two was moored to the bank above the lock, and the crew strolled into the little inn which stands by the lock, and, after stopping in the bar to lay hands on several pewters full of porter, passed through the house into the quoit and skittle-grounds behind. These were already well filled with men of other crews, playing in groups or looking on at the players. One of these groups, as they passed, seized on the Captain, and Miller stopped with him; the rest of the St. Ambrose men, in no humor for skittles, quoits, or any relaxation except rest and

grumbling, took possession of the first table and seats offered, and came to anchor.

Then followed a moment of intense enjoyment, of a sort only appreciable by those who have had a twelve miles' training pull with a coxswain as sharp as a needle, and in an awful temper.

"Ah," said Drysdale, taking the pewter down from his lips, with a sigh, and handing it to Tom who sat next him, "by Jove I feel better."

"It's almost worth while pulling 'hard all' from Abingdon to get such a thirst," said another of the crew.

"I'll tell you what, though," said Drysdale, "to-day's the last day you'll catch me in this blessed boat."

Tom had just finished his draught, but did not reply; it was by no means the first time that Drysdale had announced this resolve. The rest were silent also.

"It's bad enough to have to pull your heart out, without getting abused all the way into the bargain. There Miller stands in the stern—and a devilish easy thing it is to stand there and walk into us—I can see him chuckle as he comes to you and me, Brown—'Now, 2, well forward;' '3, don't jerk;' 'Now 2, throw your weight on the oar; come, now, you can get another pound on.' I hang on like grim Death, —then its 'Time, 2; now, 3—'"

"Well, it's a great compliment," broke in Tom, with a laugh; "he thinks he can make something of us."

"He'll make nothing of us first, I think," said Drysdale. "I've lost eight pounds in a fortnight. The Captain ought to put me in every place in the boat, in turn, to make it water-tight. I've larded the bottom boards under my seat so that not a drop of water will ever come through again."

"A very good thing for you, old fellow," said Diogenes; "you look ten times better than you did at the beginning of the term."

"I don't know what you call a good thing, you old fluter. I'm obliged to sit on my hip bones—I can't go to a lecture —all the tutors think I am poking fun at them, and put me on directly. I haven't been able to go to lecture these ten days."

"So fond of lecture as he is, too, poor fellow," put in Tom.

"But they've discommonsed me for staying away," said Drysdale; "not that I care much for that though."

"Well, Miller goes down to-morrow morning—I heard him say so," said another.

"Then we'll memorialize the Captain and get out of these Abingdon pulls. Life isn't worth having at this rate."

"No other boat has been below Sandford yet."

And so they sat on and plotted, and soon most of the other crews started. And then they took their turn at skittles, and almost forgot their grievances, which must be explained to those who don't know the river at Oxford.

The river runs along the south of the city, getting into the university quarter after it passes under the bridge connecting Berks and Oxfordshire, over which is the road to Abingdon. Just below this bridge are the boat builders' establishments on both sides of the river, and then on the Oxfordshire side is Christchurch meadow, opposite which is moored the university barge. Here is the goal of all university races; and the racecourse stretches away down the river for a mile and a half, and a little below the starting place of the races is Iffley Lock. The next lock below Iffley is the Sandford Lock (where we left our boat's crew playing at skittles), which is about a mile and a half below Iffley. Below Sandford there is no lock till you get to Abingdon, a distance of six miles and more by the river. Now, inasmuch as the longest distance to be rowed in the races is only the upper mile and a half from Iffley to the university barge, of course all crews think themselves very hardly treated if they are taken further than to Sandford. Pulling "hard all" from Sandford to Iffley, and then again from Iffley over the regular course, ought to be enough in all conscience. So chorus the crews; and most captains and coxswains give in. But here and there some enemy of his kind—some uncomfortable, worriting, energizing mortal, like Miller—gets command of a boat, and then the unfortunate crew are dragged, bemoaning their fate, down below Sandford, where no friendly lock intervenes to break the long, steady swing of the training pull every two miles, and the result for the time is blisters and mutiny. I am bound to add that it generally tells, and that the crew which has been undergoing that *peine forte et dure* is very apt to get the change out of it on the nights of hard races.

So the St. Ambrose crew played out their skittles, and settled to appeal the Captain in a body the next day, after Miller's departure; and then being summoned to the boat, they took to the water again, and paddled steadily up home,

arriving just in time for hall for those who liked to hurry. Drysdale never liked hurrying himself; besides, he could not dine in hall, as he was discommonsed for persistent absence from lecture, and neglect to go to the Dean when sent for to explain his absence.

"I say, Brown, hang hall," he said to Tom, who was throwing on his things; "come and dine with me at the Mitre. I'll give you a bottle of hock; it's very good there."

"Hock's about the worst thing you drink in training," said Miller. "Isn't it Jervis?"

"It's no good, certainly," said the Captain, as he put on his cap and gown; "come along, Miller."

"There, you hear?" said Miller. "You can drink a glass of sound sherry, if you want wine;" and he followed the Captain.

Drysdale performed a defiant pantomime after the retiring coxswain, and then easily carried his point with Tom, except as to the hock. So they walked up to the Mitre together, where Drysdale ordered dinner and a bottle of hock in the coffee-room.

"Don't order hock, Drysdale; I shan't drink any."

"Then I shall have it all to my own cheek. If you begin making a slave of yourself to that Miller, he'll very soon cut you down to a glass of water a day, with a pinch of rhubarb in it, and make you drink that standing on your head."

"Gammon; but I don't think it's fair on the rest of the crew not to train as well as one can,"

"You don't suppose drinking a pint of hock to-night will make you pull any the worse this day six weeks, when the races begin, do you?"

"No; but—"

"Hullo! look here," said Drysdale, who was inspecting a printed bill pinned up on the wall of the coffee-hall "Wombwell's menagerie is in the town, somewhere down by Worcester. What fun! We'll go there after dinner."

The food arrived with Drysdale's hock, which he seemed to enjoy all the more from the assurance which every glass gave him that he was defying the coxswain, and doing just the thing he would most dislike. So he drank away, and facetiously speculated how he could be such an idiot as to go on pulling. Every day of his life he made good resolutions in the reach above the Gut that it should be his last performance, and always broke them next day. He supposed

the habit he had of breaking all good resolutions was the way to account for it.

After dinner they set off to find the wild-beast show; and, as they will be at least a quarter of an hour reaching it, for the pitch is in a part of the suburbs little known to gowns-men, the opportunity may be seized of making a few remarks to the patient reader, which impatient readers are begged to skip.

Our hero on his first appearance in public some years since, was without his own consent at once patted on the back by the good-natured critics, and enrolled for better or worse in the brotherhood of muscular Christians, who at that time were beginning to be recognised as an actual and lusty portion of general British life. As his biographer, I am not about to take exception to his enrolment; for, after considering the persons up and down Her Majesty's dominions to whom the new nick-name has been applied, the principles which they are supposed to hold, and the sort of lives they are supposed to lead; I cannot see where he could in these times have fallen upon a nobler brotherhood. I am speaking of course under correction, and with only a slight acquaintance with the faith of muscular Christianity, gathered almost entirely from the witty expositions and comments of persons of a somewhat dyspeptic habit, who are not amongst the faithful themselves. Indeed, I am not aware that any authorized articles of belief have been sanctioned or published by the sect, Church, or whatever they may be. Moreover, at the age at which our hero has arrived, and having regard to his character, I should say that he has in all likelihood thought very little on the subject of belief, and would scarcely be able to give any formal account of his own, beyond that contained in the Church Catechism, which I for one think may very well satisfy him for the present. Nevertheless, if he had suddenly been caught at the gate of St. Ambrose's College, by one of the gentlemen who do the classifying for the British public, and accosted with, "Sir, you belong to a body whose creed it is to fear God, and walk 1000 miles in 1000 hours;" I believe he would have replied, "Do I, sir? I am very glad to hear it. They must be a very good set of fellows. How many weeks' training, do they allow?" But in the course of my inquiries on the subject of muscular Christians, their works and ways, a fact has forced itself on my attention, which, for the sake of ingenious truth, ought not to be passed over. I find, then, that, side

by side with these muscular Christians, and apparently claiming some sort of connection with them (the same concern, as the pirates of trade-marks say), have risen up another set of persons, against whom I desire to caution my readers and my hero, and to warn the latter that I do not mean on any pretense whatever to allow him to connect himself with them, however much he may be taken with their off-hand, "hail brother well-met" manner and dress, which may easily lead careless observers to take the counterfeit for the true article. I must call the persons in question "musclemen," as distinguished from muscular Christians; the only point in common between the two being, that both hold it to be a good thing to have strong and well-exercised bodies, ready to be put at the shortest notice to any work of which bodies are capable, and to do it well. Here all likeness ends; for the "muscle" man seems to have no belief whatever as to the purposes for which his body has been given him, except some hazy idea that it is to go up and down the world with him, belaboring men or captivating women for his benefit or pleasure, at once the servant and fomentor of those fierce and brutal passions which he seems to think it a necessity, and rather a fine thing than otherwise, to indulge and obey. Whereas, so far as I know, the least of the muscular Christians has hold of the old chivalrous and Christian belief, that a man's body is given him to be trained and brought into subjection, and then used for the protection of the weak, the advancement of all righteous causes, and the subduing of the earth which God has given to the children of men. He does not hold that mere strength or activity are in themselves worthy of any respect or worship, or that one man is a bit better than another because he can knock him down, or carry a bigger sack of potatoes than he. For mere power, whether of body or intellect, he has (I hope and believe) no reverence whatever, though, *cæteris paribus*, he would probably himself, as a matter of taste, prefer the man who can lift a hundred-weight round his head with his little finger to the man who can construct a string of perfect Sorites, or expound the doctrine of "contradictory inconceivables."

The above remarks occur as our hero is marching innocently down towards his first "town and gown" row, and I should scarcely like to see him in the middle of it, without protesting that it is a mistake. I know that he, and other youngsters of his kidney, will have fits of fighting, or de-

siring to fight with their poorer brethren, just as children have the measles. But the shorter the fit the better for the patient, for like the measles it is a great mistake, and a most unsatisfactory complaint. If they can escape it altogether so much the better. But instead of treating the fit as a disease, "musclemen" professors are wont to represent it as a state of health, and to let their disciples run about in middle age with the measles on them as strong as ever. Now although our hero had the measles on him at this particular time, and the passage of arms which I am about shortly to describe led to results of some importance in his history, and cannot therefore be passed over, yet I wish at the same time to disclaim, both in my sponsorial and individual character, all sympathy with town and gown rows, and with all other class rows and quarrels of every sort and kind, whether waged with sword, pen, tongue, fist or otherwise. Also to say that in all such rows, so far as I have seen or read, from the time when the Roman plebs marched out to Mons Sacer, down to 1848, when the English chartists met on Kennington Common, the upper classes are most to blame. It may be that they are not the aggressors on any given occasion; very possibly they may carry on the actual fighting with more fairness (though this is by no means true as a rule); nevertheless the state of feeling which makes such things possible, especially in England, where men in general are only too ready to be led and taught by their superiors in rank, may be fairly laid at their door. Even in the case of strikes, which just now will of course be at once thrown in my teeth, I say fearlessly, let any man take the trouble to study the question honestly, and he will come to the conviction that all combinations of the men for the purpose of influencing the labor market, whether in the much and unjustly abused Trades' Societies, or in other forms, have been defensive organizations, and that the masters might, as a body, over and over again have taken the sting out of them if they had acted fairly, as many individuals amongst them have done. Whether it may not be too late now, is a tremendous question for England, but one which time only can decide.

When Drysdale and Tom at last found the caravans, it was just getting dark. Something of a crowd had collected outside, and there was some hissing as they ascended the short flight of steps which led to the platform in front of

the show; but they took no notice of it, paid their money, and entered.

Inside they found an exciting scene. The place was pretty well lighted, and the birds and beasts were all alive in their several dens and cages, walking up and down, and each uttering remonstrances after its own manner, the shrill notes of birds mingling with the moan of the beasts of prey and chattering of the monkeys. Feeding time had been put off till night to suit the undergraduates, and the undergraduates were proving their appreciation of the attention by playing off all manner of practical jokes on birds and beasts, their keepers, and such of the public as had been rash enough to venture in. At the farther end was the keeper, who did the showman, vainly endeavouring to go through his ususal jog-trot description. His monotone was drowned every minute by the chorus of voices, each shouting out some new fact in natural history touching the biped or quadruped whom the keeper was attempting to describe. At that day a great deal of this sort of chaff was current, so that the most dunder-headed boy had plenty on the tip of his tongue. A small and indignant knot of townspeople, headed by a stout and severe middle-aged woman, with two big boys, her sons, followed the keeper, endeavouring by caustic remarks and withering glances to stop the flood of chaff, and restore the legitimate authority and the reign of keeper and natural history.

At another point was a long Irishman in cap and gown, who had clearly had as much wine as he could carry, close to the bars of the panther's den, through which he was earnestly endeavouring, with the help of a crooked stick, to draw the tail of whichever of the beasts stopped for a moment in its uneasy walk. On the other side were a set of men bent on burning the wretched monkeys' fingers with the lighted ends of their cigars, in which they seemed successful enough, to judge by the angry chatterings and shriekings of their victims.

The two new comers paused for a moment on the platform inside the curtain; and then Drysdale, rubbing his hands, and in high glee at the sight of so much misrule in so small a place, led the way down on to the floor deep in sawdust, exclaiming, "Well, this *is* a lark! We're just in for all the fun of the fair."

Tom followed his friend, who made straight for the show-

man, and planted himself at his side, just as that worthy, pointing with his pole, was proceeding—

"This is the jackal, from—"

"The Caribee Hielands, of which I'm a native mysel'," shouted a gownsman.

"This is the jackal, or lion's provider," began again the much enduring keeper.

"Who always goes before the lion to purwide his purwisions, purwiding there's anything to purwide," put in Drysdale.

"Hem—really I do think it's scandalous not to let the keeper tell about the beasteses," said the unfortunate matron, with a half turn towards the persecutors, and grasping her bag.

"My dear madam," said Drysdale, in his softest voice, "I assure you he knows nothing about the beasteses. We are Doctor Buckland's favourite pupils, are also well known to the great Panjandrum, and have eaten more beasteses than the keeper has ever seen."

"I don't know who you are, young man, but you don't know how to behave yourselves," rejoined the outraged female; and the keeper, giving up the jackal as a bad job, pointing with his pole, proceeded—

"The little hanimal in the upper cage is the hopossom, of North America—"

"The misguided offspring of the raccoon and the gum-tree," put in one of his tormentors.

Here a frightful roaring and struggling at a little distance, mingled with shouts of laughter, and "Hold on, Pat!" "Go it, panther!" interrupted the lecture, and caused a rush to the other side, where the long Irishman, Donovan, by name, with one foot against the bars, was holding on to the tail of one of the panthers, which he had at length managed to catch hold of. The next moment he was flat on his back in the sawdust, and his victim was bounding wildly about the cage. The keeper hurried away to look after the outraged panther; and Drysdale, at once installing himself as showman, began at the next cage—

"This is the wild man of the woods, or whangee-tangee, the most untameable—good heavens, ma'am, take care!" and he seized hold of the unfortunate woman and pulled her away from the bars.

"Oh, goodness!" she screamed, "it's got my tippet; oh, Bill, Peter, catch hold!" Bill and Peter proved unequal

to the occasion, but a gownsman seized the vanishing tippet, and after a moment's struggle with the great ape, restored a meagre half to the proper owner, while Jacko sat grinning over the other half, picking it to pieces. The poor woman had now had enough of it, and she hurried off with her two boys, followed by the few townspeople who were still in the show, to lay her case directly before the mayor, as she informed the delinquents from the platform before disappearing. Her wrongs were likely to be more speedily avenged, to judge by the angry murmurs which arose outside immediately after her exit.

But still the high jinks went on, Donovan leading all mischief, until the master of the menagerie appeared inside, and remonstrated with the men. "He must send for the police," he said, "if they would not leave the beasts alone. He had put off the feeding in order to suit them; would they let his keepers feed the beasts quietly?" The threat of the police was recieved with shouts of defiance by some of the men, though the greater part seemed of the opinion that matters were getting serious.

The proposal of feeding, was however, welcomed by all and comparative quiet ensued for some ten minutes, while the baskets of joints, bread, stale fish, and potatoes were brought in, and the contents distributed to the famished occupants of the cages. In the interval of peace the showman-keeper, on a hint from his master, again began his round. But the spirit of mischief was abroad, and it only needed this to make it break out again. In another two minutes the beasts, from the lion to the smallest monkey, were struggling for their suppers, with one or more undergraduates; the elephant had torn the gown off Donovan's back, having only just missed his arm; the manager in a confusion worthy of the tower of Babel, sent off a keeper for the city police, and turned the gas out

The audience, after the first moment of surprise and indignation, groped their way towards the steps and mounted the platform, where they held a council of war. Should they stay where they were or make a sally at once, break through the crowd and get back to their colleges. It was curious to see how in that short minute individual character came out, and the coward, the cautious man, the resolute prompt Englishman, each was there, and more than one species of each. Donovan was one of the last up the steps, and as he stumbled up caught something of the question

before the house. He shouted loudly at once for descending and offering battle. "But boys," he added, "first wait till I adthress the meeting," and he made for the opening in the canvas through which the outside platform was reached. Stump oratory and a free fight were just the two temptations which Donovan was wholly unable to resist; it was with a face radiant with devil may-care delight that he burst through the opening, followed by all the rest (who felt that the matter was out of their hands, and must go its own way after the Irishman), and rolling to the front of the outside platform, rested one hand on the rail, and waved the other gracefully towards the crowd. This was the signal for a burst of defiant shouts and hissing. Donovan stood blandly waving his hand for silence. Drysdale, running his eye over the mob, turned to the rest and said, "There's nothing to stop us, not twenty grown men in the whole lot." Then one of the men lighting upon the drumsticks, which the usual man in corduroys had hidden away, began beating the big drum furiously. One of the unaccountable whims which influence crowds seized on the mob, and there was almost perfect silence. This seemed to take Donovan by surprise; the open air was having the common effect on him; he was getting unsteady on his legs, and his brains were wondering. "Now's your time, Donovan, my boy—begin."

"Ah, yes, to be sure, what'll I say? let's see," said Donovan, putting his head on one side—

"Friends, Romans, countrymen," suggested some wag.

"To be sure," cried Donovan; "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears."

"Bravo Pat, well begun; pull their ears well when you've got 'em."

"Bad luck to it! where was I? you divels—I mean ladies and gentlemen of Oxford city as I was saying, the poets—"

Then the storm of shouting and hissing arose again, and Donovan, after an ineffectual attempt or two to go on, leaned forward and shook his fist generally at the mob. Luckily for him, there were no stones about; but one of the crowd, catching the first missel at hand, which happened to be a cabbage stalk, sent it with true aim at the enraged orator. He jerked his head on one side to avoid it; the motion unsteadied his cap; he threw up his hand, which, instead of catching the falling cap, as it was meant to do, sent it spinning among the crowd below. The owner,

without a moment's hesitation, clapped both hands on the bar before him, and followed his property, vaulting over on the heads of those nearest the platform, amongst whom he fell, scattering them right and left.

"Come on, gown, or he'll be murdered," sang out one of Donovan's friends. Tom was one of the first down the steps; they rushed to the spot in another moment, and the Irishman rose, plastered with dirt, but otherwise none the worse for his feat; his cap, covered with mud, was proudly stuck on, hind part before. He was of course thirsting for battle, but not quite so much master of his strength as usual; so his two friends, who were luckily strong and big men, seized him, one to each arm.

"Come along, keep together," was the word; "there's no time to lose. Push for the corn-market."

The cry of "Town! town!" now rose on all sides. The gownsmen in a compact body, with Donovan in the middle, pushed rapidly across the open space in which the caravans were set up and gained the street. Here they were comparatively safe: they were followed close, but could not be surrounded by the mob. And now again a bystander might have amused himself by noting the men's characters. Three or four pushed rapidly on, and were out of sight ahead in no time. The greater part, without showing any actual signs of fear, kept steadily on, at a good pace. Close behind these, Donovan struggled violently with his two conductors, and shouted defiance to the town; while a small and silent rear-guard, amongst whom were Tom and Drysdale, walked slowly and, to all appearance, carelessly behind, within a few yards of the crowd of shouting boys who headed the advancing town. Tom himself felt his heart beating quick, and I don't think had any particular desire for the fighting to begin, with such long odds on the town side; but he was resolved to be in it as soon as any one if there was to be any. Thus they marched through one or two streets without anything more serious than an occasional stone passing their ears. Another turn would have brought them into the open parts of the town, within hearing of the colleges, when suddenly Donovan broke loose from his supporters, and rushing with a shout on the advanced guard of the town, drove them back in confusion for some yards. The only thing to do was to back him up; so the rear-guard, shouting "Gown! gown!" charged after him. The effect of the onset was like that of Blount at Flodden, when he saw Marmion's banner

go down,—a wide space was cleared for a moment, the town driven back on the pavements, and up the middle of the street, and the rescued Donovan caught, set on his legs, and dragged away again some paces towards college. But the charging body was too few in number to improve the first success, or even to insure its own retreat. "Darkly closed the war around." The town lapped on them from the pavements, and poured on them down the middle of the street, before they had time to rally and stand together again. What happened to the rest—who was down, who fought, who fled,—Tom had no time to inquire; for he found himself suddenly the centre of a yelling circle of enemies So he set his teeth and buckled to his work; and the thought of splendid single combat, and glory such as he had read of in college stories, and tradition handing him down as the hero of that great night, flashed into his head as he cast his eye round for foemen worthy of his steel. None such appeared; so, selecting the one most of his own size, he squared and advanced on him. But the challenged one declined the combat, and kept retreating; while from behind, and at the sides, one after another of the "town" rushing out dealt Tom a blow and vanished again into the crowd. For a moment or two he kept his head and temper; the assailants individually were too insignificant to put out his strength upon; but head and temper were rapidly going;—he was like a bull in the arena with the picadores sticking their little javelins in him. A smart blow on the nose, which set a myriad of stars dancing before his eyes, finished the business, and he rushed after the last assailant, dealing blows to right and left, on small and great. The mob closed in on him, still avoiding attacks in front, but on the flank and rear they hung on him and battered at him. He had to turn sharply round after every step to shake himself clear, and at each turn the press thickened, the shouts waxed louder and fiercer; he began to get unsteady; tottered, swayed, and, stumbling over a prostrate youth, at last went down full length on to the pavement, carrying a couple of his assailants with him. And now it would have fared hardly with him, and he would scarcely have reached college with sound bones,—for I am sorry to say an Oxford town mob is a cruel and brutal one, and a man who is down has no chance with it,—but that for one moment he and his prostrate foes were so jumbled together that the town could not get at him, and the next cry of "Gown! gown!" rose high above the din; the

town ere swept back again by the rush of a reinforcement of gownsmen, the leader of whom seized him by the shoulders and put him on his legs again; while his late antagonists crawled away to the side of the road.

"Why, Brown!" said his rescuer,—Jervis, the Captain,—"this you? Not hurt, eh?"

"Not a bit," said Tom.

"Good; come on, then; stick to me." In three steps they joined the rest of the gown, now numbering some twenty men. The mob was close before them, gathering for another rush. Tom felt a cruel, wild devil beginning to rise in him: he had never felt the like before. This time he longed for the next crash, which happily for him, was fated never to come off.

"Your names and colleges, gentlemen," said a voice close behind them at this critical moment. The "town" set up a derisive shout, and, turning round, the gownsmen found the velvet sleeves of one of the proctors at their elbow and his satellites, vulgarly called bull-dogs, taking notes of them. They were completely caught, and so quietly gave the required information.

"You will go to your colleges at once," said the proctor, "and remain within gates. You will see these gentlemen to the High-street," he added to his marshal; and then strode on after the crowd, which was vanishing down the street.

The men turned and strolled towards the High-street, the marshall keeping, in a deferential but wide-awake manner, pretty close to them, but without making any show of watching them. When they reached the High-street he touched his hat and said civilly, "I hope you will go home now, gentlemen, the senior proctor is very strict."

"All right, marshall; good night," said the good-natured ones.

"D— his impudence," growled one or two of the rest, and the marshal bustled away after his master. The men looked at one another for a moment or two. They were of different colleges, and strangers. The High street was quiet, so without the exchange of a word, after the manner of British youth, they broke up into twos and threes, and parted. Jervis, Tom, and Drysdale, who turned up quite undamaged, sauntered together towards St. Ambrose's.

"I say, where are you going?" said Drysdale.

"Not to college, I vote," said Tom.

"No, there may be some more fun."

"Mighty poor fun, I should say, you'll find it," said Jervis; "however, if you will stay, I suppose I must. I can't leave you two boys by yourselves."

"Come along then, down here." So they turned down one of the courts leading out of the High-street, and so by back streets bore up again for the disturbed districts.

"Mind and keep a sharp lookout for the proctors," said Jervis; "as much row as you please, but we musn't be caught again."

"Well, only let's keep together if we have to bolt."

They promenaded in lonely dignity for some five minutes, keeping eyes and ears on full strain.

"I tell you what," said Drysdale, at last, "it isn't fair, these enemies in the camp; what with the 'town' and their stones and fists, and the proctors with their 'name and college,' we've got the wrong end of the stick."

"Both wrong ends, I can tell you," said Jervis. "Hello, Brown, your nose is bleeding."

"Is it?" said Tom, drawing his hand across his mouth; "'twas that confounded little fellow then who ran up to my side while I was squaring at the long party. I felt a sharp crack, and the little rascal bolted into the crowd before I could turn at him."

"Cut and come again," said Drysdale, laughing.

"Ay, that's the regular thing in these blackguard street squabbles. Here they come then," said Jervis. "Steady, all."

They turned around to face the town, which came shouting down the street behind them in pursuit of one gownsman, a little harmless, quiet fellow, who had fallen in with them on his way back to his college from a tea with his tutor, and, like a wise man, was giving them leg-bail as hard as he could foot it. But the little man was of a courageous, though prudent soul, and turned panting and gasping on his foes the moment he found himself amongst friends again.

"Now, then, stick together; don't let them get around us," said Jervis.

They walked steadily down the street. which was luckily a narrow one, so that three of them could keep the whole of it, halting and showing front every few yards, when the crowd pressed too much. "Down with them! Town, town! Th' s two as was in the show." "Mark the velvet-capped

chap. Town, town!" shouted the hinder part of the mob; but it was a rabble of boys as before, and the front rank took very good care of itself, and forbore from close quarters.

The small gownsman had now got his wind again; and smarting under the ignominy of his recent flight, was always a pace or two nearer the crowd than the other three, ruffling up like a little bantam, and shouting defiance between the catchings of his breath.

"You vagabonds! you cowards! Come on now, I say! Gown, gown!" And at last, emboldened by the repeated halts of the mob, and thirsting for revenge, he made a dash at one of the nearest of the enemy. The suddenness of the attack took both sides by surprise, then came a rush by two or three of the town to the rescue.

"No, no! stand back—one at a time," shouted the Captain, throwing himself between the combatants and the mob. "Go it, little 'un; serve him out. Keep the rest back, boys: steady!" Tom and Drysdale faced towards the crowd, while a little gownsman and his antagonist—who defended himself vigorously enough now—came to close quarters, in the rear of the gown line; too close to hurt one another, but what with hugging and cuffing the townsman in another half-minute was sitting quietly on the pavement with his back against the wall, his enemy squaring in front of him, and daring him to renew the combat. "Get up, you coward; get up, I say, you coward! He won't get up," said the little man, eagerly turning to the Captain. "Shall I give him a kick?"

"No, let the cur alone," replied Jervis. "Now, do any more of you want to fight? Come on, like men, one at a time. I'll fight any man in the crowd."

Whether the challenge would have been answered must rest uncertain; for now the crowd began to look back, and a cry arose, "Here they are, proctors! now they'll run."

"So we must, by Jove, Brown," said the Captain. "What's your college?" to the little hero.

"Pembroke."

"Cut away, then; your close at home."

"Very well, if I must; good night," and away went the small man as fast as he had come; and it has never been heard that he came to further grief, or performed other feats that night.

"Hang it, don't let's run," said Drysdale.

"Is it the proctors?" said Tom. "I can't see them."

"Mark the bloody-faced one; kick him over," sang out a voice in the crowd.

"Thank'ee," said Tom, savagely. "Let's have one rush at them."

"Look! there's the proctor's cap just through them; come along boys—well, stay if you like, and be rusticated, I'm off," and away went Jervis, and the next moment Tom and Drysdale followed the good example, and, as they had to run, made the best use of their legs, and in two minutes were well ahead of their pursuers. They turned a corner; "Here, Brown! alight in this public, cut in, and it's all right." Next moment they were in the dark passage of a quiet little inn, and heard with a chuckle part of the crowd scurry by the door in pursuit, while they themselves suddenly appeared in the neat little bar, to the no small astonishment of its occupants. These were a stout elderly woman in spectacles, who was stitching away at plain work in an arm-chair on one side of the fire; the foreman of one of the great boat-builders, who sat opposite her, smoking his pipe, with a long glass of clear ale at his elbow; and a bright-eyed, neat handed bar maid, who was leaning against the table, and talking to the others as they entered.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CAPTAIN'S NOTIONS.

The old lady dropped her work, the barmaid turned round with a start and little ejaculation, and the foreman stared with all his eyes for a moment, and then, jumping up, exclaimed—

"Bless us, if it isn't Muster Drysdale and Muster Brown, of Ambrose's. Why what's the matter, sir? Muster Brown, you be all covered wi' blood, sir."

"Oh dear me! poor young gentlemen!" cried the hostess: —"Here, Patty, run and tell Dick to go for the doctor, and get the best room"—

"No, please don't; it's nothing at all," interrupted Tom, laughing;—"a basin of cold water and a towel, if you please,

Miss Patty, and I shall be quite presentable in a minute. I'm very sorry to have frightened you all."

Drysdale joined in the assurances that it was nothing but a little of his friend's "claret," which he would be all the better for losing, and watched with an envious eye the interest depicted in Patty's pretty face, as she hurried in with a basin of fresh pumped water, and held the towel. Tom bathed his face, and very soon was as respectable a member of society as usual, save for a slight swelling on one side of his nose.

Drysdale meantime—seated on the table—had been explaining the circumstances to the landlady and the foreman. "And now, ma'am," said he as Tom joined them, and seated himself on a vacant chair, "I'm sure you must draw famous ale."

"Indeed, sir, I think Dick—that's my ostler, sir—is as good a brewer as is in the town. We always brew at home, sir, and I hope always shall."

"Quite right, ma'am, quite right," said Drysdale; "and I don't think we can do better than follow Jem here. Let us have a jug of the same ale as he is drinking. And you'll take a glass with us, Jem? or will you have spirits?"

Jem was for another glass of ale, and bore witness to its being the best in Oxford, and Patty drew the ale, and supplied two more long glasses. Drysdale with apologies, produced his cigar case; and Jem, under the influence of the ale and a first-rate Havannah (for which he deserted his pipe, though he did not enjoy it half as much), volunteered to go and rouse the yard and conduct them safely back to college. This offer was of course, politely declined, and then, Jem's hour for bed having come, he being a methodical man as became his position, departed, and left our two young friends in sole possession of the bar. Nothing could have suited the two young gentlemen better, and they set to work to make themselves agreeable. They listened with lively interest to the landlady's statement of the difficulties of a widow woman in a house like hers, and to her praises of her factotum Dick and her niece Patty. They applauded her resolution of not bringing up her two boys in the publican line, though they could offer no very available answer to her appeals for advice as to what trade they should be put to; all trades were so full, and things were not as they used to be. The one thing, apparently, which was wanting to the happiness of Drysdale at Oxford, was the discovery

of such beer as he had at last found at "The Choughs." Dick was to come up to St. Ambrose's the first thing in the morning and carry off his barrel, which would never contain in future any other liquid. At last that worthy appeared in the bar to know when he was to shut up, and was sent out by his mistress to see that the street was clear, for which service he received a shilling, though his offer of escort was declined. And so, after paying in a splendid manner for their entertainment, they found themselves in the street, and set off for college, agreeing on the way that "The Choughs" was a great find, the old lady was the best old soul in the world, and Patty the prettiest girl in Oxford. They found the streets quiet, and walking quickly along them, knocked at the college gates at half-past eleven. The stout porter received them with a long face.

"Senior proctor's sent down here an hour back, gentlemen to find whether you was in college."

"You don't mean that, porter? How kind of him! What did you say?"

"Said I did'nt know, sir; but the marshal said, if you come in after, that you was to go to the senior proctor's at half-past nine to-morrow."

"Send my compliments to the senior proctor," said Drysdale, "and say I have a very particular engagement to morrow morning, which will prevent my having the pleasure of calling on him."

"Very good, sir," said the porter, giving a little dry chuckle, and tapping the keys against his leg; "only perhaps you wouldn't mind writing him a note, sir, as he is rather a particular gentleman."

"Didn't he send after any one else?" said Tom.

"Yes, sir, Mr. Jervis, sir."

"Well, and what about him?"

"Oh, sir, Mr. Jervis! an old hand, sir. He'd been in gates a long time, sir, when the marshal came."

"The sly old beggar!" said Drysdale, "good night, porter; mind you send my message to the proctor. If he is set on seeing me to-morrow, you can say that he will find a broiled chicken and a hand at picquet in my rooms, if he likes to drop in to lunch."

The porter looked after them for a moment, and then retired to his deep old chair in the lodge, pulled his night cap over his ears, put up his feet before the fire on a high stool, and

folded his hands on his lap. "The most impidentest thing on the face of the earth is a gen'l'man-commoner in his first year," soliloquized the little man. "'Twould ha' done that one a sight of good, now, if he'd got a good hiding in the street to-night. But he's better than most on 'em, too," he went on; "uncommon free with his tongue, but just as free with his arf-sovereigns. Well, I'm not going to peach if the proctor don't send again in the morning. That sort's good for the college; makes things brisk; has his *wine* from town, and don't keep no keys. I wonder, now, if my Peter's been out a fighting? He's pretty nigh as hard to manage, is that boy, as if he was at college hisself."

And so, muttering over his domestic and professional grievances, the small janitor composed himself to a nap. I may add, parenthetically, that his hopeful Peter, a precocious youth of seventeen, scout's boy on No. 3 staircase of St. Ambrose's College, was represented in the boot cleaning and errand line by a substitute for some days; and when he returned to duty was minus a front tooth.

"What fools we were not to stick to the Captain. I wonder what we shall get," said Tom, who was troubled in his mind at the proctor's message, and not gifted naturally with the recklessness and contempt of authority which in Drysdale's case approached the sublime.

"Who cares? I'll be bound, now, the old fox came straight home to earth. Let's go and knock him up."

Tom assented, for he was anxious to consult Jervis as to his proceedings in the morning; so they soon found themselves drumming at his oak, which was opened shortly by "the stroke" in an old boating-jacket. They followed him in. At one end of his table stood his tea-service and the remains of his commons, which the scout had not cleared away; at the other, open books, note-books, and maps showed that the Captain read, as he rowed, "hard all."

"Well, are you two only just in?"

"Only just, my Captain," answered Drysdale.

"Have you been well thrashed, then? You don't look much damaged?"

"We are innocent of fight since your sudden departure—flight, shall I call it?—my Captain."

"Where have you been?"

"Where! why in the paragon of all pothouses; snug little bar with red curtains; stout old benevolent female in spec-

tacles; barmaid a houri; and for malt the most touching tap in Oxford—home brewed, too, wasn't it, Brown?"

"Yes, the beer was undeniable," said Tom.

"Well, and you dwadled there till now?" said Jervis.

"Even so. What with mobs that wouldn't fight fair, and the captains who would run away, and the proctors and marshals who would interfere, we were 'perfectly disgusted with the whole proceedings,' as the Scotchman said when he was sentenced to be hanged."

"Well! Heaven, they say, protects children, sailors, and drunken men; and whatever answer to Heaven in the academical system protects freshmen," remarked Jervis.

"Not us, at any rate," said Tom, "for we are to go to the proctor to-morrow morning."

"What, did he catch you in your famous public?"

"No; the marshal came round to the porter's lodge, asked if we were in, and left word that, if we were not, we were to go to him in the morning. The porter told us just now as we came in."

"Pshaw," said the Captain, with disgust; "now you'll both be gated probably, and the whole crew will be thrown out of gear. Why couldn't you have come home when I did?"

"We do not propose to attend the levee of that excellent person in office to-morrow morning," said Drysdale. "He will forget all about it. Old Copas won't say a word—catch him. He gets too much out of me for that."

"Well, you'll see; I'll back the proctor's memory."

"But, Captain, what are you going to stand?"

"Stand! nothing, unless you like a cup of cold tea. You'll get no wine or spirits here at this time of night, and the buttery is shut. Besides you've had quite as much beer as is good for you at your paragon public."

"Come, now, Captain, just two glasses of sherry, and I'll promise to go to bed."

"Not a thimbleful."

"You old tyrant!" said Drysdale, hopping off his perch on the elbow of the sofa. "Come along, Brown, let's go and draw for some supper, and a hand at Van John. There's sure to be something going up my staircase; or, at any rate, there's a cool bottle of claret in my rooms."

"Stop and have a talk, Brown," said the Captain, and prevailed against Drysdale, who, after another attempt to draw Tom off, departed on his quest for drink and cards.

"He'll never do for the boat, I'm afraid," said the Captain; "with his rascally late hours, and drinking and eating all sorts of trash. It's a pity, too, for he's a pretty oar for his weight."

"He is such uncommon good company, too," said Tom.

"Yes; but I'll tell you what. He's just a leetle too good company for you and me, or any fellows who mean to take a degree. Let's see, this is only his third term? I'll give him, perhaps, two more to make the place too hot to hold him. Take my word for it, he'll never get to his little-go."

"It will be a great pity, then," said Tom.

"So it will. But after all, you see, what does it matter to him? He gets rusticated; takes his name off with a flourish of trumpets—what then? He falls back on 5,000*l.* a year in land, and a good accumulation in consols; runs abroad, or lives in town for a year. Takes the hounds when he comes of age, or is singled out by some discerning constituency, and sent to make laws for his country, having spent the whole of his life hitherto in breaking all the laws he ever came under. You and I, perhaps, go fooling about with him, and get rusticated. We make our friends miserable. We can't take our names off, but have to come cringing back at the end of our year, marked men. Keep our tails between our legs for the rest of the time. Lose a year at our professions, and most likely have the slip casting up against us in one way or another for the next twenty years. It's like the old story of the giant and the dwarf, or like fighting a sweep, or any other one-sided business."

"But I'd sooner have to fight my own way in the world after all; wouldn't you?" said Tom.

"H—m—m!" said the Captain, throwing himself back in the chair, and smiling; "can't answer off hand. I'm a third year man, and begin to see the other side rather clearer than I did when I was a freshman like you. Three years at Oxford, my boy, will teach you something of what rank and money count for, if they teach you nothing else."

"Why here's the Captain singing the same song as Hardy," thought Tom.

"So you two have to go to the proctor to-morrow?"

"Yes."

"Shall you go? Drysdale won't."

"Of course I shall. It seems to me childish not to go; a if I were back in the lower school again. To tell you th

truth, the being sent for isn't pleasant; but the other I couldn't stand."

"Well, I don't feel anything of that sort. But I think you're right on the whole. The chances are that he'll remember your name, and send for you again if you don't go; and then you'll be worse off."

"You don't think he'll rusticate us, or anything of that sort?" said Tom, who had felt horrible twinges at the Captain's picture of the effects of rustication on ordinary mortals.

"No; not unless he's in a very bad humour. I was caught three times in one night in my freshman's term, and only got an imposition."

"Then I don't care," said Tom. "But it's a bore to have been caught in so seedy an affair; if it had been a real good row, one wouldn't have minded so much."

"Why, what did you expect? It was neither better nor worse than the common run of such things."

"Well, but three parts of the crowd were boys."

"So they are always—or nine times out of ten at any rate."

"But there was no real fighting: at least, I only know I got none."

"There isn't any real fighting, as you call it, nine times out of ten."

"What is there, then?"

"Why, something of this sort. Five shopboys, or scouts' boys, full of sauciness, loitering at an out-of-the-way street corner. Enter two freshmen, full of dignity and bad wine. Explosion of inflammable material. Freshmen mobbed into High-street or Broad-street, where the tables are turned by the gathering of many more freshmen, and the mob of town boys quietly subsides, puts its hands in its pockets, and ceases to shout 'Town, town!' The triumphant freshmen march up and down for perhaps half an hour, shouting 'Gown, gown!' and looking furious, but not half sorry that the mob vanishes like mist at their approach. Then come the proctors, who hunt down, and break up the gown in some half-hour or hour. The 'town' again marches about in the ascendant, and mobs the scattered freshmen, wherever they can be caught in very small numbers."

"But with all your chaff about freshmen, Captain, you were in it yourself to-night; come now."

"Of course, I had to look after you two boys.

"But you did'nt know we were in when you came up?"

"I was sure to find some of you. Besides, I'll admit one don't like to go in while there's any chance of a real row as you call it, and so gets proctorized in one's old age for one's patriotism."

"Were you ever in a real row?" said Tom.

"Yes, once, about a year ago. The fighting numbers were about equal, and the town all gown men, labourers and mechanics. It was desperate hard work, none of your shouting and promenading. That Hardy, one of our Bible clerks, fought like a Paladin; I know I shifted a fellow in corduroys on to him, whom I had found an uncommon tough customer, and never felt better pleased in my life than when I saw the light glance on his hobnails as he went over into the gutter two minutes afterwards. It lasted, perhaps, ten minutes, and both sides were very glad to draw off."

"But, of course, you licked them?"

"We said we did."

"Well, I believe that a gentleman will always lick in a fair fight."

"Of course you do, it's the orthodox belief."

"But don't you?"

"Yes; if he is as big and strong, and knows how to fight as well as the other. The odds are that he cares a little more for giving in, and that will pull him through."

"That isn't saying much, though."

"No, but it's quite as much as is true. I'll tell you what it is, I think just this, that we are generally better in the fighting way than shopkeepers, clerks, flunkies, and all fellows who don't work hard with their bodies all day. But the moment you come to the real hard-fisted fellow, used to nine or ten hours' work a day, he's a cruel hard customer. Take seventy or eighty of them at haphazard, the first you meet, and turn them into St. Ambrose any morning—by night I take it they would be lords of this venerable establishment if we had to fight for the possession; except, perhaps, for that Hardy—he's one of a thousand, and was born for a fighting man; perhaps he might pull us through."

"Why don't you try him in the boat?"

"Miller manages all that. I spoke to him about it after that row, but he said that Hardy had refused to subscribe to the club, said he couldn't afford it, or something of the sort.

I don't see why that need matter, myself, but I suppose, as we have rules, we ought to stick to them."

"It's a great pity though. I know Hardy well, and you can't think what a fine fellow he is."

"I'm sure of that. I tried to know him, and we don't get on badly as speaking acquaintance. But he seems a queer, solitary bird."

Twelve o'clock struck; so Tom wished the Captain good night and departed, meditating much on what he had heard and seen. The vision of terrible single combats, in which the descendant of a hundred earls polishes off the huge representative of the masses in the most finished style, without a scratch on his own aristocratic features, had faded from his mind.

He went to bed that night, fairly sickened with his experience of a town and gown row, and with a nasty taste in his mouth. But he felt much pleased at having drawn out the Captain so completely. For "the stroke" was in general a man of marvellous few words, having many better uses than talking to put his breath to.

Next morning he attended at the proctor's rooms at the appointed time, not without some feeling of shame at having to do so; which, however, wore off when he found some dozen men of other colleges waiting about on the same errand as himself. In his turn he was ushered in, and as he stood by the door, had time to look the great man over as he sat making a note of the case he had just disposed of. The inspection was reassuring. The proctor was a gentlemanly, straight-forward looking man of about thirty, not at all donnish, and his address answered to his appearance.

"Mr. Brown, of St. Ambrose's, I think," he said.

"Yes, sir."

"I sent you to your college yesterday evening: did you go straight home?"

"No, sir."

"How was that, Mr. Brown?"

Tom made no answer, and the proctor looked at him steadily for a few seconds, and then repeated.

"How was that?"

"Well, sir," said Tom, "I don't mean to say I was going straight to college, but I should have been in long before you sent, only I fell in with the mob again, and then there was a cry that you were coming. And so—" He paused.

"Well," said the proctor, with a grim sort of curl about the corners of his mouth.

"Why, I ran away, and turned into the first place which was open, and stopped till the streets were quiet."

"A public house, I suppose."

"Yes, sir; 'The Choughs.'"

The proctor considered a minute, and again scrutinized Tom's look and manner, which certainly were straightforward, and without any tinge of cringing or insolence.

"How long have you been up?"

"This is my second term, sir."

"You have never been sent to me before, I think?"

"Never, sir."

"Well, I can't overlook this, as you yourself confess to a direct act of disobedience. You must write me out 200 lines of Virgil. And now, Mr. Brown, let me advise you to keep out of disreputable street quarrels in future. Good morning."

Tom hurried away, wondering what it would feel like to be writing out Virgil again as a punishment at his time of life, but glad above measure that the proctor had asked him no questions about his companion. The hero was, of course, mightily tickled at the result, and seized the occasion to lecture Tom on his future conduct, holding himself up as a living example of the benefits which were sure to accrue to a man who never did anything he was told to do. The soundness of his reasoning, however, was somewhat shaken by the dean, who, on the same afternoon, managed to catch him in quad; and, carrying him off, discoursed with him concerning his various and systematic breaches of discipline, pointed out to him that he had already made such good use of his time that if he were to be discommonsed for three more days he would lose his term; and then took of his cross, gave him a book of Virgil to write out and gated him for a fortnight after hall. Drysdale sent out his scout to order his punishment as he might have ordered a waistcoat, presented old Copas with a half-soverign, and then dismissed punishment and gating from his mind. He cultivated with great success the science of mental gymnastics, or throwing everything the least unpleasant off his mind at once. And no doubt it is a science worthy of all cultivation, if one desires to lead a comfortable life. It gets harder, however, as the years roll over us, to attain to any satisfactory proficiency in it; so it should be mastered as early in life as may be.

The town and gown row was the talk of the college for the next week. Tom, of course, talked much about it, like his neighbors, and confided to one and another the Captain's heresies. They were all incredulous; for no one had ever heard him talk as much in a term as Tom reported him to have done on this one evening.

So it was resolved that he should be taken to task on the subject on the first opportunity; and, as nobody was afraid of him, there was no difficulty in finding a man to bell the cat. Accordingly, at the next wine of the boating set, the Captain had scarcely entered when he was assailed by the host with—

"Jervis, Brown says you don't believe a gentleman can lick a cad, unless he is the biggest and strongest of the two."

The Captain, who hated coming out with his beliefs, shrugged his shoulders, sipped his wine, and tried to turn the subject. But, seeing that they were all bent on drawing him out, he was not the man to run from his guns; and so he said quietly:

"No more I do."

Notwithstanding the reverence in which he was held, this saying could not be allowed to pass, and a dozen voices were instantly raised, and a dozen authentic stories told to confute him. He listened patiently, and then, seeing he was in for it, said:

"Never mind fighting. Try something else; cricket, for instance. The players generally beat the gentlemen, don't they?"

"Yes; but they are professionals."

"Well, and we don't often get a university crew which can beat the watermen?"

"Professionals again."

"I believe the markers are the best tennis-players, ain't they?" persevered the Captain; "and I generally find keepers and huntsmen shooting and riding better than their masters, don't you?"

"But that's not fair. All the cases you put are those of men who have nothing else to do, who live by the things which gentlemen only take up for pleasure."

"I only say that the cads, as you call them, manage, somehow or another, to do them best," said the Captain.

"How about the army and navy? The officers always lead,"

"Well, there they're all professionals, at any rate," said the Captain. "I admit that the officers lead; but the men follow pretty close. And in a forlorn hope there are fifty men to one officer, after all."

"But they must be led. The men will never go without an officer to lead."

"It's the officers' business to lead, I know; and they do it. But you won't find the best judges talking as if the men wanted much leading. Read Napier: the finest story in his book is of the sergeant who gave his life for his boy officer's —your namesake, Brown—at the Coa."

"Well, I never thought to hear you crying down gentlemen."

"I'm not crying down gentlemen," said the Captain. "I only say that a gentleman's flesh and blood, and brains, are just the same, and no better than another man's. He has all the chances on his side in the way of training, and pretty near all the prizes; so it would be hard if he didn't do most things better than poor men. But give them the chance of training, and they will tread on his heels soon enough. That's all I say."

That was all, certainly, that the Captain said, and then relapsed into his usual good-tempered monosyllabic state; from which all the eager talk of the men, who took up the cudgels naturally enough for their own class, and talked themselves before the wine broke up into a renewed consciousness of their natural superiority, failed again to rouse him.

This was, in fact, the Captain's weak point, if he had one. He had strong beliefs himself; one of the strongest of which was, that nobody could be taught anything except by his own experience; so he never, or very rarely, exercised his own personal influence, but just quietly went on his own way, and let other men go theirs. Another of his beliefs was, that there was no man or thing in the world too bad to be tolerated; faithfully acting up to which belief, the Captain himself tolerated persons and things intolerable.

Bearing which facts in mind, the reader will easily guess the result of the application which the crew duly made to him the day after Miller's back was turned. He simply said that the training they proposed would not be enough, and that he himself should take all who chose to go down, to Abingdon twice a week. From that time there were many defaulters; and the spirit of Diogenes groaned within him,

as day after day the crew had to be filled up from the torpid or by watermen. Drysdale would ride down to Sandford, meeting the boat on its way up, and then take his place for the pull up to Oxford, while his groom rode his horse up to Folly bridge to meet him. There he would mount again and ride off to Bullingdon, or to the Isis, or Quentin, or other social meeting equally inimical to good training. Blake often absented himself three days in a week, and other men once or twice.

From considering which facts, Tom came to understand the difference between his two heroes; their strong likeness in many points he had seen from the first. They were alike in truthfulness, bravery, bodily strength, and in most of their opinions. But Jervis worried himself about nothing, and let all men and things alone, in the belief that the world was not going so very wrong, or would right itself somehow without him. Hardy, on the other hand, was consuming his heart over everything that seemed to him to be going wrong in himself and round about him—in the college, in Oxford, in England, in the ends of the earth, and never letting slip a chance of trying to set right, here a thread, and there a thread. A self-questioning, much-enduring man; a slayer of dragons himself, and one with whom you could not live much without getting uncomfortably aware of the dragons which you also had to slay.

What wonder that, apart altogether from the difference in their social position, the one man was ever becoming more and more popular, while the other was left more and more to himself. There are few of us at Oxford, or elsewhere, who do not like to see a man living a brave and righteous life, so long as he keeps clear of us; and still fewer who *do* like to be in constant contact with one who, not content with so living himself, is always coming across them, and laying bare to them their own faint-heartedness, and sloth, and meaness. The latter, no doubt, inspires the deeper feeling, and lays hold with a firmer grip of the men he does lay hold of, but they are few. For men can't always keep up to high pressure till they have found firm ground to build upon, altogether outside of themselves; and it is hard to be thankful and fair to those who are showing us time after time that our foothold is nothing but shifting sand.

The contrast between Jervis and Hardy now began to force itself daily more and more on our hero's attention.

From the night of the town and gown row, "The Choughs" became a regular haunt of the St. Ambrose crew, who were taken there under the guidance of Tom and Drysdale the next day. Not content with calling there on his way from the boats, there was seldom an evening now that Tom did not manage to drop in and spend an hour there.

When one is very much bent on doing a thing, it is generally easy enough to find very good reasons, or excuses at any rate, for it; and whenever any doubts crossed Tom's mind, he silenced them by the reflection that the time he spent at "The Choughs" would otherwise have been devoted to wine parties or billiards; and it was not difficult to persuade himself that his present occupation was the more wholesome of the two. He could not, however, feel satisfied till he had mentioned his change in life to Hardy. This he found a much more embarrassing matter than he fancied it would be. But, after one or two false starts, he managed to get out that he had found the best glass of ale in Oxford, at a quiet little public on the way to the boats, kept by the most perfect of widows, with a factotum of an ostler, who was a regular character, and that he went there most evenings for an hour or so. Wouldn't Hardy come some night?

No, Hardy couldn't spare the time.

Tom felt rather relieved at this answer; but, nevertheless went on to urge the excellence of the ale as a further inducement.

"I don't believe it's half so good as our college beer, and I'll be bound it's half as dear again."

"Only a penny a pint dearer," said Tom, "that won't ruin you,—all the crew go there."

"If I were the Captain," said Hardy, "I wouldn't let you run about drinking ale at night after wine parties. Does he know about it?"

"Yes, and goes there himself often on the way from the boats," said Tom.

"And at night, too?" said Hardy.

"No," said Tom, "but I don't go there after drinking wine; I haven't been to a wine these ten days, at least not for more than five minutes."

"Well, sound ale is better than Oxford wine," said Hardy, "if you must drink something;" and so the subject dropped.

And Tom went away satisfied that Hardy had not disapproved of his new habit. It certainly occurred to him that he had omitted all mention of the pretty barmaid in his enumeration of the attractions of "The Choughs," but this he set down to mere accident; it was a slip which he would set right in their next talk. But that talk never came, and the subject was not again mentioned between them. In fact, to tell the truth, Tom's visits to his friend's room in the evenings became shorter and less frequent as "The Coughs" absorbed more and more of his time. He made excuses to himself, that Hardy must be glad of more time, and would be only bored if he kept dropping in every night, now that the examination for degree was so near; that he was sure he drove Grey away, who would be of much more use to Hardy just now. These, and many other equally plausible reasons, suggested themselves whenever his conscience smote him for his neglect, as it did not seldom. But he always managed to satisfy himself somehow, without admitting the real fact, that these visits were no longer what they had been to him; that a gulf had sprung up, and was widening day by day between him and the only friend who would have had the courage and honesty to tell him the truth about his new pursuit. Meantime Hardy was much pained at the change in his friend, which *he* saw quickly enough, and often thought over it with a sigh as he sat at his solitary tea. He set it down to his own dullness, to the number of new friends such a sociable fellow as Tom was sure to make, and who, of course, would take up more and more of his time; and, if he felt a little jealousy every now and then, put it resolutely back, struggling to think no evil, or if there were any, to lay it on his own shoulders.

Cribbage is a most virtuous and respectable game, and yet scarcely, one would think, possessing in itself sufficient attractions to keep a young gentleman in his twentieth year tied to the board, and going through the quaint calculation night after night of "fifteen two, fifteen four, two for his nob, and one for his heels." The old lady of "The Choughs" liked nothing so much as her game of cribbage in the evenings, and the board lay ready on the little table by her elbow in the cozy bar, a sure stepping-stone to her good graces. Tom somehow became an enthusiast in cribbage, and would always loiter behind his companions for his quiet game; chatting pleasantly while the old lady cut and shuf-

fled the dirty pack, striving keenly for the nightly stake of sixpence, which he seldom failed to lose, and laughingly wrangling with her over the last points in the game which decided the transfer of the two sixpences (duly posted in the snuffer-tray beside the cribbage-board) into his waistcoat pocket or her bag, until she would take off her spectacles to wipe them, and sink back in her chair exhausted with the pleasing excitement.

Such an odd taste as it seemed, too, a bystander might reasonably have thought, when he might have been employing his time so much more pleasantly in the very room. For, flitting in and out of the bar during the game, and every now and then stooping over the old lady's shoulder to examine her hand, and exchange knowing looks with her, was the lithe little figure of Miss Patty, with her oval face, and merry eyes, and bright brown hair, and jaunty little cap, with fresh blue ribbons of the shade of the St. Ambrose colors. However, there is no accounting for tastes, and it is fortunate that some like apples and some onions. It may possibly be, too, that Miss Patty did not feel herself neglected, or did not care about attention. Perhaps she may not have been altogether unconscious that every least motion and word of hers was noticed, even when the game was at its keenest. At any rate, it was clear enough that she and Tom were on the best terms, though she always took her aunt's part vehemently in any little dispute which arose, and sometimes even came to the rescue at the end, and recaptured the vanished sixpences out of the wrongful grasp which he generally laid on them the moment the old lady held out her hand and pronounced the word "game." One knows that size has little to do with strength, or one might have wondered that her little hands should have been able to open his fingers so surely one by one, though he seemed to do all he could to keep them shut. But, after all, if he really thought he had a right to the money, he had always time to put it in his pocket at once, instead of keeping his clenched hand on the table, and arguing about it till she had time to get up to the succour of her aunt.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE FIRST BUMP.

"WHAT's the time, Smith?"

"Half-past three, old fellow," answered Diogenes, looking at his watch.

"I never knew a day go so slowly," said Tom; "isn't it time to go down to the boats?"

"Not by two hours and more, old fellow—can't you take a book, or something to keep you quiet? You won't be fit for anything by six o'clock, if you go on worrying like this." And so Diogenes turned himself to his flute, and blew away to all appearances as composedly as if it had been the first week of term, though, if the truth must be told, it was all he could do not to get up and wander about in a feverish and distracted state, for Tom's restlessness infected him.

Diogenes' whole heart was in the college boat: and so, though he had pulled dozens of races in his time, he was almost as nervous as a freshman on this the first day of the races. Tom, all unconscious of the secret discomposure of the other, threw himself into a chair and looked at him with wonder and envy. The flute went "toot, toot, toot," till he could stand it no longer. So he got up and went to the window, and, leaning out, looked up and down the street for some minutes in a purposeless sort of fashion, staring hard at everybody and everything, but unconscious all the time that he was doing so. He would not have been able, in fact, to answer Diogenes a word, had not that worthy inquired of him what he had seen, when he presently drew in his head and returned to his fidgety ramblings about the room.

"How hot the sun is! but there's a stiff breeze from the south-east. I hope it will go down before the evening, don't you?"

"Yes, this wind will make it very rough below the Gut. Mind you feather high now at starting."

"I hope to goodness I sha'n't catch a crab," said Tom.

"Don't think about it old fellow; that's your best plan."

"But I can't think of anything else," said Tom. "What the deuce is the good of telling a fellow not to think about it?"

Diogenes apparently had nothing particular to reply, for he put his flute to his mouth again; and at the sound of the "toot, toot" Tom caught up his gown and fled into the quadrangle.

The crew had had their early dinner of steaks and chops, stale bread, and a glass and a half of old beer a piece at two o'clock, in the Captain's rooms. The current theory of training at that time was—as much meat as you could eat, the more underdone the better, and the smallest amount of drink upon which you could manage to live. Two pints in the twenty-four hours was all that most boat's crews that pretended to train at all were allowed, and for the last fortnight it had been the nominal allowance of the St. Ambrose crew. The discomfort of such a diet in the hot summer months, when you were at the same time taking regular and violent exercise, was something very serious. Outraged human nature rebelled against it; and though they did not admit it in public, there were very few men who did not rush to their water bottles for relief, more or less often, according to the development of their bumps of conscientiousness and obstinacy. To keep to the diet at all strictly, involved a very respectable amount of physical endurance. Our successors have found out the unwisdom of this, as of other old superstitions; and that in order to get a man into training for a boat-race now-a-days, it is not of the first importance to keep him in a constant state of consuming thirst, and the restlessness of body and sharpness of temper which thirst generally induces.

Tom appreciated the honor of being in the boat in his first year so keenly, that he had almost managed to keep to his training allowance, and consequently, now that the eventful day had arrived, was in a most uncomfortable frame of body and disagreeable frame of mind.

He fled away from Diogenes' flute, but found no rest. He tried Drysdale. That hero was lying on his back on his sofa playing with Jack, and only increased Tom's thirst and soured his temper by the viciousness of his remarks on boating, and everything and person connected therewith; above all, on Miller, who had just come up, had steered them the day before, and pronounced the crew generally, and Drysdale in particular, "not half trained."

Blake's oak was sported, as usual. Tom looked in at the Captain's door, but found him hard at work reading, and so carried himself off; and, after a vain hunt after others of

the crew, and even trying to sit down and read, first a novel, then a play of Shakespeare, with no success whatever, wandered away out of the college, and found himself in five minutes, by a natural and irresistable attraction, on the university barge.

There were half a dozen men or so reading the papers, and a group or two discussing the coming races. Amongst other things the chances of St. Ambrose's making a bump the first night were weighed. Every one joining in praising the stroke, but there were great doubts whether the crew could live up to it. Tom carried himself on to the top of the barge to get out of hearing, for listening made his heart beat and his throat drier than ever. He stood on the top and looked right away down to the Gut, the strong wind blowing his gown about. Not even a pair oar was to be seen; the great event of the evening made the river a solitude at this time of day. Only one or two skiffs were coming home, impelled by reading men, who took their constitutionals on the water, and were coming in to be in time for afternoon chapel. The fastest and best of these soon came near enough for Tom to recognize Hardy's stroke; so he left the barge and went down to meet the servitor at his landing, and accompanied him to the St. Ambrose dressing-room.

"Well, how do you feel for the race to-night?" said Hardy, as he dried his neck and face, which he had been sluicing with cold water, looking as hardy and bright as a racer on Derby day.

"Oh, wretched! I'm afraid I shall break down," said Tom, and pouring out some of his doubts and miseries. Hardy soon comforted him greatly; and by the time they were half across Christchurch meadow, he was quite in heart again. For he knew how well Hardy understood rowing, and what a sound judge he was; and it was therefore cheering to hear that he thought they were certainly the second best, if not the best boat on the river; and that they would be sure to make some bumps unless they had accidents.

"But that's just what I fear so," said Tom. "I'm afraid I shall make some awful blunder."

"Not you!" said Hardy; "only remember. Don't you fancy you can pull the boat by yourself, and go to trying to do it. There's where young oars fail. If you keep thorough

good time you'll be pretty sure to be doing your share of work. Time is everything, almost."

"I'll be sure to think of that," said Tom; and they entered St. Ambrose just as the chapel bell was going down; and he went to chapel and then to hall, sitting by and talking for companionship while the rest dined.

And so at last the time slipped away, and the Captain and Miller mustered them at the gates and walked off to the boats. A dozen other crews were making their way in the same direction, and half the undergaduates of Oxford streamed along with them. The banks of the river were crowded; and the punts plied rapidly backwards and forwards, carrying loads of men over to the Berkshire side. The university barge, and all the other barges, were decked with flags, and the band was playing lively airs as the St. Ambrose crew reached the scene of action.

No time was lost in the dressing-room, and in two minutes they were all standing in flannel trousers and silk jerseys at the landing-place.

"You had better keep your jackets on," said the Captain; "we sha'nt be off yet."

"There goes Brazen-nose."

"They look like work, don't they?"

"The black and yellow seems to slip along so fast. They're no end of good colors. I wish our new boat was black."

"Hang her colors, if she's only stiff in the back, and don't dip."

"Well, she didn't dip yesterday; at least, the men on the bank said so."

"There go Baliol, and Oriel, and University."

"By Jove, we shall be late! Where's Miller?"

"In the shed, getting the boat out. Look, here's Exeter."

The talk of the crew was silenced for the moment as every man looked eagerly at the Exeter boat. The Captain nodded to Jervis with a grim smile as they paddled gently by.

Then the talk began again.

"How do you think she goes?"

"Not so badly. They're very strong in the middle of the boat."

"Not a bit of it; it's all lumber."

"You'll see. They're better trained than we are. They look as fine as stars."

"So they ought. They've pulled seven miles to our five for the last month, I'm sure."

"Then we sha'nt bump them."

"Why not?"

"Don't you know that the value of products consist in the quanity of labor which goes to produce them? Product pace over course from Iffley up. Labor expended, Exeter, 7; St. Ambrose, 5. You see it is not in the nature of things that we should bump them—Q.E.D."

"What moonshine! as if ten miles behind their stroke are worth two behind Jervis!"

"My dear fellow, it isn't my moonshine; you must settle the matter with the philosphers. I only apply a universal law to a particular case."

Tom unconscious of the pearls of economic lore which were being poured out for the benefit of the crew, was watching the Exeter eight as it glided away towards the Cherwell. He thought they seemed to keep horribly good time.

"Halloa, Drysdale; look, there's Jack going across in one of the punts."

"Of course it is. You don't suppose he would go down to see the race."

"Why won't Miller let us start? Almost all the boats are off."

"There's plenty of time. We may just as well be up here as dawling about the bank at Iffley."

"We sha'nt go down till the last; Miller never lets us get out down below."

"Well, come; here's the boat, at last."

The new boat now emerged from its shed, guided steadily to where they were standing by Miller and the waterman. Then the coxswain got out and called for bow, who stepped forward.

"Mind how you step now, there are no bottom boards, remember," said Miller.

"Shall I take my jacket?"

"Yes; you had better all go down in jackets in this wind, I've sent a man down to bring them back. Now, two."

"Aye, aye!" said Drysdale stepping forward. Then came Tom's turn, and soon the boat was manned.

"Now," said Miller, taking his place, "are all your stretchers right?"

"I should like a little more grease on my rollocks."

"I'm taking some down; we'll put it on down below. Are you all right?"

"Yes."

"Then push her off—gently."

The St. Ambrose boat was almost the last, so there were no punts in the way, or other obstructions; and they swung steadily down past the university barge, the top of which was already covered with spectators. Every man in the boat felt as if the eyes of Europe was on him, and pulled in his very best form. Small groups of gownsmen were scattered along the bank in Christchurch meadow, chiefly dons, who were really interested in the races, but, at that time of day, seldom liked to display enthusiam enough to cross the water and go down to the starting-place. These sombre groups lighted up here and there by the dresses of a few ladies, who were walking up and down, and watching the boats. At the mouth of the Cherwell were moored to punts, in which reclined at their ease some dozen young gentlemen, smoking; several of these were friends of Drysdale's, and hailed him as the boat passed.

"What a fool I am to be here!" he grumbled, in an under tone, casting an envious glance at the punts in their comfortable berth, up under the banks, and out of the wind. "I say, Brown, don't you wish we were well past this on the way up?"

"Silence in the bows?" shouted Miller.

"You devil, how I hate you!" growled Drysdale, half in jest and half in earnest, as they sped along under the willows.

Tom got more comfortable at every stroke, and by the time they reached the Gut began to hope that he should not have a fit, or lose all his strength just at the start, or cut a crab, or come to some other unutterable grief, the fear of which had been haunting him all day.

"Here they are at last!—come along now—keep up with them," said Hardy to Grey, as the boat neared the Gut; and the two trotted along downwards, Hardy watching the crew, and Grey watching him.

"Hardy, how eager you look!"

"I'd give twenty pounds to be going to pull in the race."

Grey shambled on in silence by the side of his big friend, and wished he could understand what it was that moved him so.

As the boat shot into the Gut from under the cover of the Oxfordshire bank, the wind caught the bows.

"Feather high, now," shouted Miller; and then added in a low voice to the Captain, "It will be ticklish work, starting in this wind."

"Just as bad for all the other boats," answered the Captain.

"Well said, old philosopher!" said Miller. "It's a comfort to steer you; you never make a fellow nervous. I wonder if you ever felt nervous yourself, now?"

"Can't say," said the Captain. "Here's our post; we may as well turn."

"Easy, bow side—now two and four, pull her round—back water, seven and five!" shouted the coxswain; and the boat's head swung round, and two or three strokes took her into the bank.

Jack instantly made a convulsive attempt to board, but was sternly repulsed, and tumbled backwards into the water.

Hark!—the first gun. The report sent Tom's heart into his mouth again. Several of the boats pushed off at once into the stream; and the crowds of men on the bank began to be agitated, as it were, by the shadow of the coming excitement. The St. Ambrose crew fingered their oars, put a last dash of grease on their rollocks, and settled their feet against the stretchers.

"Shall we push her off?" asked "bow."

"No, I can give you another minute," said Miller, who was sitting, watch in hand, in the stern, "only be smart when I give the word."

The Captain turned on his seat, and looked up the boat. His face was quiet, but full of confidence, which seemed to pass from him into the crew. Tom felt calmer and stronger, as he met his eye. "Now mind, boys, don't quicken," he said, cheerily; "four short strokes, to get way on her, and then steady. Here, pass up the lemon."

And he took a sliced lemon out of his pocket, put a small piece into his own mouth, and then handed it to Blake, who followed his example, and passed it on. Each man took a piece; and just as "bow" had secured the end, Miller called out—

"Now, jackets off, and get her head out steadily."

The jackets were thrown on shore, and gathered up by the boatmen in attendance. The crew poised their oars, No. 2 pushing out her head, and the Captain doing the

same for the stern. Miller took the starting-rope in his hand.

"How the wind catches her stern," he said; "here, pay out the rope one of you. No, not you—some fellow with a strong hand. Yes, you'll do," he went on, as Hardy stepped down the bank and took hold of the rope; "let me have it foot by foot as I want it. Not too quick; make the most of it—that'll do. Two and three dip your oars in to give her way."

The rope paid out steadily, and the boat settled to her place. But now the wind rose again, and the stern drifted towards the bank.

"You *must* back her a bit, Miller, and keep her a little further out, or our oars on stroke side will catch the bank."

"So I see; curse the wind. Back her, one stroke all. Back her, I say!" shouted Miller.

It is no easy matter to get a crew to back her an inch just now, particularly as there are in her two men who have never rowed a race before, except in the torpids, and one who has never rowed a race in his life.

However, back she comes; the starting-rope slackens in Miller's left hand, and the stroke, unshipping his oar, pushes the stern gently out again.

There goes the second gun! one short minute more, and we are off. Short minute, indeed! you wouldn't say so if you were in the boat, with your heart in your mouth, and trembling all over like a man with the palsy. Those sixty seconds before the starting gun in your first race—why, they are a little life-time.

"By Jove, we are drifting in again," said Miller, in horror. The Captain looked grim, but said nothing; it was too late now for him to be unshipping again. "Here, catch hold of the long boat-hook, and fend her off."

Hardy, to whom this was addressed, seized the boat-hook and, standing with one foot in the water, pressed the end of the boat-hook against the gunwale, at the full stretch of his arm, and so, by main force, kept the stern out. There was just room for stroke oars to dip, and that was all. The starting-rope was as taut as a harp-string; will Miller's left hand hold out?

It is an awful moment. But the coxswain, though almost dragged backwards off his seat, is equal to the occasion. He holds his watch in his right hand with the tiller rope.

"Eight seconds more only. Look out for the flash. Remember, all eyes in the boat."

There it comes, at last—the flash of the starting gun. Long before the sound of the report can roll up the river, the whole pent-up life and energy which has been held in leash, as it were, for the last six minutes, is let loose, and breaks away with a bound and a dash which he who has felt it will remember for his life, but the like of which, will he ever feel again? The starting-ropes drop from the coxswains' hands, the oars flash into the water, and gleam on the feather, the spray flies from them, and the boats leap forward.

The crowds on the bank scatter, and rush along, each keeping as near as it may be to its own boat. Some of the men on the towing path, some on the very edge of, often in, the water—some slightly in advance, as if they could help to drag their boat forward—some behind, where they can see the pulling better—but all at full speed, in wild excitement, and shouting at the top of their voices to those on whom the honor of the college is laid.

"Well pulled, all!" "Pick her up there, five!" "You're gaining, every stroke!" "Time in the bows!" "Bravo, St. Ambrose!"

On they rushed by the side of the boats, jostling one another, stumbling, struggling, and panting along.

For a quarter of a mile along the bank the glorious maddening hurly-burly extends, and rolls up the side of the stream.

For the first ten strokes Tom was in too great fear of making a mistake to feel or hear or see. His whole soul was glued to the back of the man before him, his one thought to keep time, and get his strength into the stroke. But as the crew settled down into the well known long sweep, what we may call consciousness returned; and while every muscle in his body was straining, and his chest heaved, and his heart leapt, every nerve seemed to be gathering new life, and his senses to wake into unwonted acuteness. He caught the scent of the wild thyme in the air, and found room in his brain to wonder how it could have got there, as he had never seen the plant near the river, or smelt it before. Though his eye never wandered from the back of Diogenes, he seemed to see all things at once. The boat behind, which seemed to be gaining—it was all he could do to prevent himself from quickening on the stroke as he fancied that—the eager face of Miller, with his compressed lips, and eyes fixed

so earnestly ahead that Tom could almost feel the glance passing over his right shoulder; the flying banks and the shouting crowd; see them with his bodily eyes he could not, but he knew nevertheless that Grey had been upset and nearly rolled down the bank into the water in the first hundred yards, that Jack was bounding and scrambling and barking along by the very edge of the stream; above all, he was just as well aware as if he had been looking at it, of a stalwart form in cap and gown, bounding along, brandishing the long boat-hook, and always keeping just opposite the boat; and amid all the Babel of voices, and the dash and pulse of the stroke, and the laboring of his own breathing, he heard Hardy's voice coming to him again and again, and clear as if there had been no other sound in the air, "Steady, two! steady! well pulled! steady, steady!" The voice seemed to give him strength and keep him to his work. And what work it was! he had had many a hard pull in the last six weeks, but "never aught like this."

But it can't last for ever; men's muscles are not steel, or their lungs bull's hide, and hearts can't go on pumping a hundred miles an hour without bursting. The St. Ambrose's boat is well away from the boat behind, there is a great gap between the accompanying crowds; and now, as they near the Gut, she hangs for a moment or two in hand, though the roar from the bank grows louder and louder, and Tom is already aware that the St. Ambrose crowd is melting into the one ahead of them.

"We must be close to Exeter!" The thought flashes into him, and it would seem into the rest of the crew at the same moment. For, all at once, the strain seems taken off their arms again; there is no more drag; she springs to the stroke as she did at the start; and Miller's face which had darkened for a few seconds, lightens up again.

Miller's face and attitude are a study. Coiled up into the smallest possible space, his chin almost resting on his knees, his hands close to his sides, firmly but lightly feeling the rudder, as a good horseman handles the mouth of a free-going hunter,—if a coxswain could make a bump by his own exertions, surely he will do it. No sudden jerks of the St. Ambrose rudder will you see, watch as you will from the bank; the boat never hangs through fault of his, but easily and gracefully rounds every point. "You're gaining! you're gaining!" he now and then mutters to the Captain, who responds with a wink, keeping his breath for

other matters. Isn't he grand, the Captain, as he comes forward like lightning, stroke after stroke, his back flat, his teeth set, his whole frame working from the hips with the regularity of a machine? As the space still narrows, the eyes of the fiery little coxswain flash with excitment, but he is far too good a judge to hurry the final effort before the victory is safe in his grasp.

The two crowds mingle now, and no mistake; and the shouts come all in a heap over the water. "Now, St. Ambrose, six strokes more." "Now, Exeter, you're gaining; pick her up." "Mind the Gut, Exeter." "Bravo, St. Ambrose." The water rushes by, still edying from the strokes of the boat ahead. Tom fancies now that he can hear their oars and the working of their rudder, and the voice of their coxswain. In another moment both boats are in the Gut, and a perfect storm of shouts reaches them from the crowd, as it rushes madly off to the left of the footbridge, amidst which "Oh, well-steered, well steered, St. Ambrose!" is the prevailing cry. Then Miller, motionless as a statue till now, lifts his right hand and whirls the tassel round his head: "Give it her now, boys; six strokes and we are into them." Old Jervis lays down that great broad back, and lashes his oar through the water with the might of a giant, the crew caught him up in another stroke, the tight new boat answers to the spurt, and Tom feels a little shock behind him, and then a grating sound, as Miller shouts "Unship oars bow and three," and the nose of the St. Ambrose boat glides quietly up the side of the Exeter, till it touches their stroke oar.

"Take care what you're coming to." It is the coxswain of the bumped boat who speaks.

Tom, looking round, finds himself within a foot or two of him; and, being utterly unable to contain his joy, and yet unwilling to exhibit it before the eyes of a gallant rival, turns away towards the shore, and begins telegraphing to Hardy.

"Now then, what are you at there in the bows? Cast her off quick. Come, look alive! Push across at once out of the way of the other boats."

"I congratulate you, Jervis," says the Exeter stroke, as the St. Ambrose boat shot past him. "Do it again next race and I sha'n't care."

"We were within three lengths of Brazen-nose when we bumped," says the all-observant Miller in a low voice.

"All right," answers the Captain; "Brazen-nose isn't so strong as usual. We sha'n't have much trouble there, but a tough job up above, I take it."

"Brazen-nose was better steered than Exeter."

"They muffed it in the Gut, eh?" said the Captain. "I thought so by the shouts."

"Yes, we were pressing them a little down below, and their coxswain kept looking over his shoulder. He was in the Gut before he knew it, and had to pull his left hand hard or they would have fouled the Oxfordshire corner. That stopped their way, and in we went."

"Bravo; and how well we started too."

"Yes, thanks to that Hardy. It was touch and go though; I couldn't have held that rope two seconds more."

"How did our fellows work; she dragged a good deal below the Gut."

Miller looked somewhat serious, but even he cannot be finding fault just now. For the first step is gained, the first victory won; and, as Homer sometimes nods, so Miller relaxes the sterness of his rule. The crew, as soon as they have found their voices again, laugh and talk, and answer the congratulations of their friends, as the boat slips along close to the towing path on the Berks side, "easy all," almost keeping pace nevertheless with the lower boats, which are racing up under the willows on the Oxfordshire side. Jack, after one or two feints, makes a frantic bound into the water, and is hauled dripping into the boat by Drysdale, unchid by Miller, but to the intense disgust of Diogenes, whose pantaloons and principles are alike outraged by the proceeding. He—the Cato of the oar—scorns to relax the strictness of his code even after victory won. Neither word nor look does he cast to the exhulting St. Ambrosians on the bank; a twinkle in his eye and a subdued chuckle or two, alone betray that though an oarsman he is mortal. Already he revolves in his mind the project of an early walk under a few pea-coats, not being quite satisfied (conscientious old boy!) that he tried his stretcher enough in that final spurt, and thinking that there must be an extra pound of flesh on him somewhere or other which did the mischief.

"I say, Brown," said Drysdale, "how do you feel?"

"All right," said Tom; "I never felt jollier in my life."

"By Jove, though, it was an awful grind; didn't you wish yourself well out of it below the Gut?"

"No, nor you either."

"Didn't I? I was awfully baked, my throat is like a lime-kiln yet. What did you think about?"

"Well, about keeping time, I think," said Tom, laughing, "but I can't remember much."

"I only kept on by thinking how I hated those devils in the Exeter boat, and how done up they must be, and hoping their No. 2 felt like having a fit."

At this moment they came opposite the Cherwell. The leading boat was just passing the winning-post, off the university barge, and the band struck up the "Conquering Hero," with a crash. And while a mighty sound of shouts, murmurs, and music went up into the evening sky, Miller shook the tiller-ropes again, the Captain shouted, "Now then, pick her up," and the St. Ambrose boat shot up between the swarming banks at racing pace to her landing-place, the lion of the evening.

Dear readers of the gentler sex! you, I know, will pardon the enthusiasm which stirs our pulses, now in sober middle age, as we call up again the memories of this the most exciting sport of our boyhood (for we were but boys then, after all). You will pardon, though I fear hopelessly unable to understand, the above sketch; your sons and brothers will tell you it could not have been less technical.

For you, male readers, who have never handled an oar, —what shall I say to you? You at least, I hope, in some way—in other contests of one kind or another—have felt as we felt, and have striven as we strove. You *ought* to understand and sympathize with us in all our boating memories. Oh, how fresh and sweet they are! Above all, that one of the gay little Henley town, the carriage crowded bridge, the noble river reach, the giant poplars, which mark the critical point of the course—the roaring column of "undergrads," light blue and dark purple, Cantab and Oxonian, alike and yet how different,—hurling along together, and hiding the towing-path—the clang of Henley church-bells —the cheering, the waving of embroidered handkerchiefs, and glancing of bright eyes, the ill-concealed pride of fathers, the open delight and exultation of mothers and sisters—the levée in the town-hall when the race was rowed, the great cup full of champagne (inn champagne, but we were not critical)—the chops, the steaks, the bitter beer—but we run into anti-climax—remember, we were boys then, and bear with us if you cannot sympathize.

And you, old companions, θρανῖται, benchers, (of the gallant eight-oar), now seldom met, but never-forgotten, lairds, squires, soldiers, merchants, lawyers, grave J.P.'s, graver clergymen, gravest bishops (for of two bishops at least does our brotherhood boast), I turn for a moment, from my task, to reach to you the right hand of fellowship from these pages, and empty the solemn pewter—trophy of hard-won victory—to your health and happiness.

Surely none the worse Christians and citizens are ye for your involuntary failing of muscularity!

CHAPTER XIV.

A CHANGE IN THE CREW, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

It was on a Saturday that the St. Ambrose boat made the first bump, described in our last chapter. On the next Saturday, the day-week after the first success, at nine o'clock in the evening, our hero was at the door of Hardy's rooms. He just stopped for one moment outside, with his hand on the lock, looking a little puzzled, but withal pleased, and then opened the door and entered. The little estrangement which there had been between them for some weeks, had passed away since the races had begun. Hardy had thrown himself into the spirit of them so thoroughly, that he had not only regained all his hold on Tom, but had warmed up the whole crew in his favour, and had mollified the martinet Miller himself. It was he who had managed the starting-rope in every race, and his voice from the towing path had come to be looked upon as a safe guide for clapping on or rowing steady. Even Miller, autocrat as he was, had come to listen for it, in confirmation of his own judgment, before calling on the crew for the final effort.

So Tom had recovered his old footing in the servitor's rooms; and when he entered on the night in question did so with the bearing of an intimate friend. Hardy's tea commons were on one end of the table as usual, and he was sitting at the other poring over a book. Tom marched straight up to him, and leant over his shoulder.

"What, here you are at the perpetual grind," he said,

"Come, shut up, and give me some tea; I want to talk to you."

Hardy looked up with a grim smile.

"Are you up to a cup of tea?" he said; "look here, I was just reminded of you fellows. Shall I construe for you?"

He pointed with his finger to the open page of the book he was reading. It was the Knights of Aristophanes, and Tom, leaning over his shoulder, read.—

κἄτα καθίζου μαλακῶς ἵνα μὴ τρίβῃς τὴν ἐν Σαλαμῖνι, &c.

After meditating a moment, he burst out, "You hard-hearted old ruffian! I come here for sympathy, and the first thing you do is to poke fun at me out of your wretched classics. I've a good mind to clear out and not to do my errand."

"What's a man to do?" said Hardy. "I hold that it's always better to laugh at fortune. What's the use of repining? You have done famously, and second is a capital place on the river."

"Second be hanged!" said Tom. "We mean to be first."

"Well, I hope we may!" said Hardy. "I can tell you nobody felt it more than I—not even old Diogenes—when you didn't make your bump to-night."

"Now you talk like a man, and a Saint Ambrosian," said Tom. "But what do you think? Shall we ever catch them?" and, so saying, he retired to a chair opposite the tea-things.

"No," said Hardy; "I don't think we ever shall. I'm very sorry to say it, but they are an uncommonly strong lot, and we have a weak place or two in our crew. I don't think we can do more than we did to-night—at least with the present crew."

"But if we could get a little more strength we might?"

"Yes, I think so. Jervis's stroke is worth two of theirs. A very little more powder would do it."

"Then we must have a little more powder."

"Ay, but how are we to get it? Who can you put in?"

"You!" said Tom, sitting up. "There, now, that's just what I am come about. Drysdale is to go out. Will you pull next race? They all want you to row."

"Do they?" said Hardy, quietly (but Tom could see that his eye sparkled at the notion, though he was too proud to

show how much he was pleased); "then they had better come and ask me themselves."

"Well, you cantankerous old party, they're coming, I can tell you!" said Tom in great delight. "The Captain just sent me on to break ground, and will be here directly himself. I say now, Hardy," he went on, "don't you say no. I've set my heart upon it. I'm sure we shall bump them if you pull."

"I don't know that," said Hardy, getting up, and beginning to make tea, to conceal the excitement he was in at the idea of rowing; "you see I'm not in training."

"Gammon," said Tom, "you're always in training, and you know it."

"Well," said Hardy, "I can't be in worse than Drysdale. He has been of no use above the Gut this last three nights."

"That's just what Miller says," said Tom, "and here comes the Captain." There was a knock at the door while he spoke, and Jervis and Miller entered.

Tom was in a dreadful fidget for the next twenty minutes, and may best be compared to an enthusiastic envoy negotiating a treaty, and suddenly finding his action impeded by the arrival of his principals. Miller was very civil, but not pressing; he seemed to have come more with a view of talking over the present state of things, and consulting upon them, than to enlisting a recruit. Hardy met him more than halfway, and speculated on all sorts of possible issues, without a hint of volunteering himself. But presently Jervis, who did not understand finessing, broke in, and asked Hardy, point blank, to pull in the next race; and when he pleaded want of training, overruled him at once by saying that there was no better training than sculling. So in half an hour all was settled. Hardy was to pull five in the next race, Diogenes was to take Blake's place, at No. 7, and Blake to take Drysdale's oar at No. 2. The whole crew were to go for a long training walk the next day, Sunday, in the afternoon; to go down to Abingdon on Monday, just to get into swing in their new places, and then on Tuesday to abide the fate of war. They had half an hour's pleasant talk over Hardy's tea, and then separated.

"I always told you he was our man," said the Captain to Miller, as they walked together to the gates; "we want strength, and he is as strong as a horse. You must have seen him sculling yourself. There isn't his match on the river to my mind."

"Yes, I think he'll do," replied Miller; "at any rate he can't be worse than Drysdale."

As for Tom and Hardy, it may safely be said that no two men in Oxford went to bed in better spirits that Saturday night than they two.

And now to explain how it came about that Hardy was wanted. Fortune had smiled upon the St. Ambrosians in the two races which succeeded the one in which they had bumped Exeter. They had risen two more places without any very great trouble. Of course, the constituencies on the bank magnified their powers and doings. There never was such a crew, they were quite safe to be head of the river, nothing could live against their pace. So the young oars in the boat swallowed all they heard, thought themselves the finest fellows going, took less and less pains to keep up their condition, and when they got out of earshot of Jervis and Diogenes, were ready to bet two to one that they would bump Oriel the next night, and keep easily head of the river for the rest of the races.

Saturday night came, and brought with it a most useful though unpalatable lesson to the St. Ambrosians. The Oriel boat was manned chiefly by old oars, seasoned in many a race, and not liable to panic when hard pressed. They had a fair, though not a first-rate stroke, and a good coxswain; experts remarked that they were rather too heavy for their boat, and that she dipped a little when they put on anything like a severe spurt; but on the whole they were by no means the sort of crew you could just run into hand over hand. So Miller and Diogenes preached, and so the Ambrosians found out to their cost.

They had the pace of the other boat, and gained as usual a boat's length before the Gut; but, first those two fatal corners were passed, and then other well-remembered spots where former bumps had been made, and still Miller made no sign; on the contrary, he looked gloomy and savage. The St. Ambrosian shouts from the shore too changed from the usual exultant peals into something like a quaver of consternation, while the air was rent with the name and laudations of "little Oriel."

Long before the Cherwell Drysdale was completely baked (he had played truant the day before and dined at the Weirs, where he had imbibed much dubious hock), but he from old habit managed to keep time. Tom and the other young oars got flurried, and quickened; the boat

dragged, there was no life left in her, and, though they managed just to hold their first advantage, could not put her a foot nearer the stern of the Oriel boat, which glided past the winning-post a clear boat's length ahead of her pursuer, and with a crew much less depressed.

Such races must tell on strokes; and even Jervis, who had pulled magnificently throughout, was very much done at the close, and leant over his oar with a swimming in his head, and an approach to faintness, and was scarcely able to see for a minute or so. Miller's indignation knew no bounds, but he bottled it up till he had manœuvered the crew into their dressing-room by themselves, Jervis having stopped below. Then he did not spare them. "They would kill their captain, whose little finger was worth the whole of them; they were disgracing the college; three or four of them had neither heart, head nor pluck." They all felt that this was unjust, for after all had they not brought the boat up to the second place? Poor Diogenes sat in a corner and groaned; he forgot to prefix "old fellow" to the few observations he made. Blake had great difficulty in adjusting his necktie before the glass; he merely remarked in a pause of the objurgation, "In faith, coxswain, these be very bitter words." Tom and most of the others were too much out of heart to resist; but at last Drysdale fired up—

"You've no right to be so savage that I can see," he said, suddenly stopping the low whistle in which he was indulging, as he sat on the corner of the table; "you seem to think No 2 the weakest out of several weak places in the boat."

"Yes, I do," said Miller.

"Then this honourable member," said Drysdale, getting off the table, "seeing that his humble efforts are unappreciated, thinks it best for the public service to place his resignation in the hands of your coxswainship."

"Which my coxswainship is graciously pleased to accept," replied Miller.

"Hurrah for a roomy punt and a soft cushion next racing night—it's almost worth while to have been rowing all this time, to realize the sensations I shall feel when I see you fellows passing the Cherwell on Tuesday."

"*Suave est*, it's what I'm partial to, *mari magno*, in the last reach, *terrâ*, from the towing path, *alterius magnum spectare laborem*, to witness the tortures of you wretched

beggars in the boat. I'm obliged to translate for Drysdale, who never learned Latin," said Blake, finishing his tie before the glass. There was an awkward silence. Miller was chafing inwardly and running over in his mind what was to be done; and nobody else seemed quite to know what ought to happen next, when the door opened and Jervis came in.

"Congratulate me, my Captain," said Drysdale; "I'm well out of it at last."

Jervis "pished and pshaw'd" a little at hearing what had happened, but his presence acted like oil on the waters. The moment the resignation was named, Tom's thoughts had turned to Hardy. Now was the time—he had such confidence in the man, that the idea of getting him in for next race entirely changed the aspect of affairs to him, and made him feel as "bumptious" again as he had done in the morning. So with this idea in his head, he hung about till the Captain had made his toilet, and joined himself to him and Miller as they walked up.

"Well, what are we going to do now," said the Captain.

"That's just what you have to settle," said Miller; "you have been up all the term, and know the men's pulling better than I."

"I suppose we must press somebody from the torpid—let me see, there's Burton."

"He rolls like a porpoise," interrupted Miller, positively; "impossible."

"Stewart might do, then."

"Never kept time for three strokes in his life," said Miller.

"Well, there are no better men," said the Captain.

"Then we may lay our account to stopping where we are, if we don't even lose a place," said Miller.

"Dust unto dust, what must be, must;
If you can't get crumb, you'd best eat crust."

said the Captain.

"It's all very well talking coolly now," said Miller, "but you'll kill yourself trying to bump, and there are three more nights."

"Hardy would row if you asked him, I'm sure," said Tom.

The Captain looked at Miller, who shook his head. "I don't think it," he said· "I take him to be a shy bird that

won't come to everybody's whistle. We might have had him two years ago, I believe—I wish we had."

"I always told you so," said Jervis; "at any rate let's try him. He can but say no, and I don't think he will for you see he has been at the starting place every night, and as keen as a freshman all the time."

"I'm sure he won't," said Tom; "I know he would give anything to pull."

"You had better go to his rooms and sound him," said the Captain; "Miller and I will follow in half an hour." We have already heard how Tom's mission prospered.

The next day, at a few moments before two o'clock, the St. Ambrose crew, including Hardy, with Miller (who was a desperate and indefatigable pedestrain), for leader, crossed Magdalen Bridge. At five they returned to college, having done a little over fifteen miles fair heal and toe walking in the interval. The afternoon had been very hot, and Miller chuckled to the Captain, "I don't think there will be much trash left in any of them after that. That fellow Hardy is as fine as a race-horse, and, did you see, he never turned a hair all the way."

The crew dispersed to their rooms, delighted with the performance now that it was over, and feeling that they were much the better for it, though they all declared it had been harder work than any race they had yet pulled. It would have done a trainer's heart good to have seen them, some twenty minutes afterwards, dropping into hall (where they were allowed to dine on Sundays on the joint), fresh from cold baths, and looking ruddy and clear, and hard enough for anything.

Again on Monday, not a chance was lost. The St. Ambrose boat started soon after one o'clock for Abingdon. They swung steadily down the whole way, and back again to Sandford without a single spurt; Miller generally standing in the stern and preaching above all things steadiness and time. From Sandford up, they were accompanied by half a dozen men or so, who ran up the bank watching them. The struggle for the first place on the river was creating great excitement in the rowing world, and these were some of the most keen connoisseurs, who, having heard that St. Ambrose had changed a man, were on the look-out to satisfy themselves as to how it would work. The general opinion was veering round in favor of Oriel

changes so late in the races, at such a critical moment, were looked upon as very damaging.

Foremost amongst the runners on the bank was a wiry, dark man, with a sanguine complexion, who went with a peculiar long, low stride, keeping his keen eye well on the boat. Just above Kennington Island, Jervis, noticing this particular spectator for the first time, called on the crew, and, quickening his stroke, took them up the reach at racing pace. As they lay in Iffley Lock the dark man appeared above them, and exchanged a few words and a great deal of dumb show with the Captain and Miller, and then disappeared.

From Iffley up they went steadily again. On the whole Miller seemed to be in very good spirits in the dressing room; he thought the boat trimmed better, and went better than she had ever done before, and complimented Blake particularly for the ease with which he had changed sides. They all went up in high spirits, calling on their way at "The Choughs" for one glass of old ale round, which Miller was graciously pleased to allow. Tom never remembered till they were out again that Hardy had never been there before, and felt embarrassed for a moment, but it soon passed off. A moderate dinner and early to bed finished the day, and Miller was justified in his parting remark to the Captain, "Well, if we don't win, we can comfort ourselves that we hav'n't dropped a stitch this last two days, at any rate."

Then the eventful day arose which Tom, and many others felt was to make or mar St. Ambrose. It was a glorious early-summer day, without a cloud, scarcely a breath of air stirring. "We shall have a fair start at any rate," was the general feeling. We have already seen what a throat-drying, nervous business, the morning of a race-day is, and must not go over the same ground more than we can help; so we will imagine the St. Ambrose boat down at the starting place, lying close to the towing path, just before the first gun.

There is a much greater crowd than usual opposite the two first boats. By this time most of the other boats have found their places, for there is not much chance of anything very exciting down below; so, besides the men of Oriel and St. Ambrose (who muster to-night of all sorts, the fastest of the fast and the slowest of the slow having been by this time shamed into something like enthusiasm), many of other

colleges, whose boats have no chance of bumping or being bumped, flock to the point of attraction.

"Do you make out what the change is?" says a backer of Oriel to his friend in the like predicament.

"Yes, they've got a No. 5, don't you see, and, by George, I don't like his looks," answered his friend; "awfully long and strong in the arm, and well ribbed up. A devilish awkward customer. I shall go and try to get a hedge."

"Pooh," says the other, "did you ever know one man win a race?"

"Ay, that I have," says his friend, and walks off toward the Oriel crowd to take five to four on Oriel in half-sovereigns, if he can get it.

Now their dark friend of yesterday comes up at a trot, and pulls up close to the Captain, with whom he is evidently dear friends. He is worth looking at, being coxswain of the O. U. B., the best steerer, runner and swimmer in Oxford; amphibious himself and sprung from an amphibious race. His own boat is in no danger, so he has left her to take care of herself. He is on the look-out for recruits for the University crew, and no recruiting sergeant has a sharper eye for the sort of stuff he requires.

"What's his name?" he says in a low tone to Jervis, giving a jerk with his head towards Hardy. "Where did you get him?"

"Hardy," answers the Captain, in the same tone; "it's his first night in the boat."

"I know that," replies the coxswain; "I never saw him row before yesterday. He's the fellow who sculls in that brown skiff, isn't he?"

"Yes, and I think he'll do; keep your eye on him."

The coxswain nods as if he were somewhat of the same mind, and examines Hardy with the eye of a connoisseur pretty much as the judge at an agricultural show looks at the prize bull. Hardy is tightening the strop of his stretcher and all-unconscious of the compliments which are being paid him. The great authority seems satisfied with his inspection, grins, rubs his hands, and trots off to the Oriel boat to make comparisons.

Just as the first gun is heard, Grey sidles nervously to the front of the crowd as if he were doing something very audacious, and draws Hardy's attention, exchanging sympathizing nods with him, but saying nothing, for he knows not what to say, and then disappearing again in the crowd.

"Hallo, Drysdale, is that you?" says Blake, as they push off from the shore. "I thought you were going to take it easy in a punt."

"So I thought," says Drysdale, "but I couldn't keep away, and here I am. I shall run up; and mind, if I see you within ten feet, and cock-sure to win, I'll give a view holloa. I'll be bound you shall hear it."

"May it come speedily," said Blake, and then settled himself in his seat.

"Eyes in the boat—mind now, steady all, watch the stroke and don't quicken."

These are Miller's last words; every faculty of himself and the crew being now devoted to getting a good start. This is no difficult matter, as the water is like glass, and the boat lies lightly on it, obeying the slightest dip of the oars of bow and two, who just feel the water twice or thrice in the last minute. Then, after a few moments of breathless hush on the bank, the last gun is fired, and they are off.

The same scene of mad excitement ensues, only tenfold more intense, as almost the whole interest of the races is to-night concentrated on the two head boats and their fate. At every gate there is a jam, and the weaker vessels are shoved into the ditches, upset and left unnoticed. The most active men, including the O. U. B. coxswain, shun the gates altogether, and take the big ditches in their stride, making for the long bridges, that they may get quietly over these and be safe for the best part of the race. They know that the critical point of the struggle will be near the finish.

Both boats made a beautiful start, and again as before in the first dash the St. Ambrose pace tells, and they gain their boat's length before first winds fail; then they settle down for a long steady effort. Both crews are rowing comparatively steady reserving themselves for the tug of war up above. Thus they pass the Gut, and those two treacherous corners, the scene of countless bumps, into the wider water beyond, up under the willows.

Miller's face is decidedly hopeful; he shows no sign, indeed, but you can see that he is not the same man as he was at this place in the last race. He feels that to-day the boat is full of life, and that he can call on his crew with hopes of an answer. His well-trained eye also detects that, while both crews are at full stretch, his own, instead of losing, as it did on the last night, is now gaining inch by inch on Oriel. The gain is scarcely perceptible to him

even; from the bank it is quite imperceptible; but there it is; he is surer and surer of it, as one after another the willows are left behind.

And now comes the pinch. The Oriel captain is beginning to be conscious of the fact which has been dawning on Miller, but will not acknowledge it to himself, and as his coxswain turns the boat's head gently across the stream, and makes for the Berkshire side and the goal, now full in view, he smiles grimly as he quickens his stroke; he will shake off these light heeled gentry yet, as he did before.

Miller sees the move in a moment, and signals his captain, and the next stroke St. Ambrose has quickened also; and now these is no mistake about it, St. Ambrose is creeping up slowly but surely. The boat's length lessens to forty feet, thirty feet; surely and steadily lessens. But the race is not lost yet; thirty feet is a short space enough to look at on the water, but a good bit to pick up foot by foot in the last two or three hundred yards of a desperate struggle. They are over, under the Berkshire side now, and there stands up the winning-post, close ahead, all but won. The distance lessens, and lessens still, but the Oriel crew stick steadily and gallantly to their work, and will fight every inch of distance to the last. The Oriel men on the bank, who are rushing along sometimes in the water, sometimes out, hoarse, furious, madly alternating between hope and dispair, have no reason to be ashamed of a man in the crew. Off the mouth of the Cherwell there is still twenty feet between them. Another minute and it will be over one way or another. Every man in both crews is now doing his best, and no mistake; tell me which boat holds the most men who can do better than their best at a pinch, who will risk a broken blood-vessel, and I will tell you how it will end. "Hard pounding, gentlemen; let's see who will pound longest," the Duke is reported to have said at Waterloo, and won. "Now, Tommy, lad, 'tis thou or I," Big Ben said as he came up to the last round of his hardest fight, and won. Is there a man of that temper in either crew to night? If so, now's his time. For both coxswains have called on their men for the last effort; Miller is whirling the tassel of his right-hand tiller rope round his head, like a wiry little lunatic; from the towing path, from Christchurch meadow, from the row of punts, from the clustered tops of the barges, comes a roar of encouragement and applause, and the band, unable to resist the impulse, breaks

with a crash into the "Jolly Young Watermen," playing two bars to the second. A bump in the Gut is nothing—a few partisans on the towing-path to cheer you, already out of breath; but up here at the very finish, with all Oxford looking on, when the prize is the headship of the river—once in a generation only do men get such a chance.

Who ever saw Jervis not up to his work? The St. Ambrose stroke is glorious. Tom had an atom of go still left in the very back of his head, and at this moment he heard Drysdale's view holloa above all the din; it seemed to give him a lift, and other men besides in the boat, for in another six strokes the gap is lessened and St. Ambrose has crept up to ten feet, and now to five from the stern of Oriel. Weeks afterwards Hardy confided to Tom that when he heard that view holloa he seemed to feel the muscles of his arms and legs turn into steel, and did more work in the last twenty strokes than in any other forty in the earlier part of the race.

Another fifty yards and Oriel is safe, but the look on the captain's face is so ominous that their coxswain glances over his shoulder. The bow of St. Ambrose is within two feet of their rudder. It is a moment for desperate expedients. He pulls his left tiller rope suddenly, thereby carrying the stern of his own boat out of the line of the St. Ambrose, and calls on his crew once more; they respond gallantly yet, but the rudder is against them for a moment, and the boat drags. St. Ambrose overlaps. "A bump, a bump," shout the St. Ambrosians on shore. "Row on, row on," screams Miller. He has not yet felt the electric shock, and knows he will miss his bump if the young ones slacken for a moment. A young coxswain would have gone on making shonts at the stern of the Oriel boat, and so have lost.

A bump now and no mistake; the bow of the St. Ambrose boat jams the oar of the Oriel stroke, and the two boats pass the winning-post with the way that was on them when the bump was made. So near a shave was it.

Who can describe the scene on the bank? It was a hurly-burly of delirious joy, in the midst of which took place a terrific combat between Jack and the Oriel dog—a noble black bull terrior belonging to the college in general, and no one in particular—who always attended the races and felt the misfortune keenly. Luckily they were parted without worse things happening; for though the Oriel men were

savage, and not disinclined for a jostle, the milk of human kindness was too strong for the moment in their adversaries. So Jack was choked off with some trouble, and the Oriel men extricated themselves from the crowd, carrying off Crib, their dog, and looking straight before them into vacancy.

"Well rowed, boys," says Jervis, turning round to his crew as they lay panting on their oars.

"Well rowed, five," says Miller, who even in the hour of such a triumph is not inclined to be general in laudation.

"Well rowed, five," is echoed from the bank; it is that cunning man, the recruiting-sergeant. "*Fatally* well rowed," he adds to a comrade, with whom he gets into one of the punts to cross to Christchurch meadow; "we must have him in the University crew."

"I don't think you'll get him to row, from what I hear," answers the other.

"Then he must be handcuffed and carried into the boat by force," says the O. U. B. coxswain; "why is not the pressgang an institution in this university?"

CHAPER XV.

A STORM BREWS AND BREAKS.

CERTAINLY Drysdale's character came out well that night. He did not seem the least jealous of the success which had been achieved through his dismissal. On the contrary, there was no man in the college who showed more interest in the race, or joy at the result, than he. Perhaps the pleasure of being out of it himself may have reckoned for something with him. In any case, there he was at the door with Jack, to meet the crew as they landed after the race, with a large pewter, foaming with shandygaff, in each hand, for their recreation. Draco himself could not have forbidden them to drink at that moment; so, amidst shaking of hands and clapping on the back, the pewters travelled round from stroke to bow, and then the crew went off to their dressing-room, accompanied by Drysdale and others.

"Bravo! it was the finest race that has been seen on the river this six years; everybody says so. You fellows have deserved well of your country. I've sent up to college to have supper in my room, and you must all come. Hang training! there are only two more nights, and you're safe to keep your place. What do you say Captain? eh, Miller? Now be good-natured for once."

"Well, we don't get head of the river every night," said Miller. "I don't object if you'll all turn out and go to bed at eleven."

"That's all right," said Drysdale; "and now let's go to the old 'Choughs' and have a glass of ale while supper is getting ready. Eh, Brown?" and he hooked his arm into Tom's and led the way into the town.

"I'm so sorry you were not in it for the finish," said Tom, who was quite touched by his friend's good-humour.

"Are you?" said Drysdale; "it's more than I am, then, I can tell you. If you could have seen yourself under the willows, you wouldn't have thought yourself much of an object of envy. Jack and I were quite satisfied with our share of work and glory on the bank. Weren't we old fellow?" at which salution Jack reared himself on his hind legs and licked his master's hand.

"Well, you're a real good fellow for taking it as you do. I don't think I could have come near the river if I had been you."

"I take everything as it comes," said Drysdale. "The next race is on Derby day, and I couldn't have gone if I hadn't been turned out of the boat; that's a compensation, you see. Here we are. I wonder if Miss Patty has heard of the victory?"

They turned down the little passage entrance of "The Choughs" as he spoke, followed by most of the crew, and by a tail of younger St. Ambrosians, their admirers, and the bar was crowded the next moment. Patty was there, of course, and her services were in great requisition; for though each of the crew only took a small glass of the old ale, they made as much fuss about it with the pretty barmaid as if they were drinking hogsheads. In fact, it had become clearly the correct thing with the St. Ambrosians to make much of Patty; and, considering the circumstances, it was only a wonder that she was not more spoiled than seemed to be the case. Indeed, as Hardy stood up in the corner opposite to the landlady's chair, a silent on-looker at the

scene, he couldn't help admitting to himself that the girl held her own well, without doing or saying anything unbecoming a modest woman. And it was a hard thing for him to be fair to her, for what he saw now in a few minutes confirmed the impression which his former visit had left on his mind—that his friend was safe in her toil; how deeply, of course he could not judge, but that there was more between them than he could approve was now clear enough to him, and he stood silent, leaning against the wall in that farthest corner, in the shadow of a projecting cupboard, much distressed in mind, and pondering over what it behove him to do under the circumstances. With the exception of a civil sentence or two to the old landlady, who sat opposite him knitting, and casting rather uneasy looks from time to time towards the front of the bar, he spoke to no one. In fact, nobody came near that end of the room, and their existence seemed to have been forgotten by the rest.

Tom had been a little uncomfortable for the first minute; but after seeing Hardy take his glass of ale, and then missing him, he forgot all about him, and was too busy with his own affairs to trouble himself further. He had become a sort of drawer, or barman, at "The Cloughs," and presided, under Patty, over the distribution of the ale, giving an eye to his chief to see that she was not put upon.

Drysdale and Jack left after a short stay, to see that the supper was being properly prepared. Soon afterwards Patty went off out of the bar in answer to some bell which called her to another part of the house; and the St. Ambrosians voted that it was time to go off to college to supper, and cleared out into the street.

Tom went out with the last batch of them, but lingered a moment in the passage outside. He knew the house and its ways well enough by this time. The next moment Patty appeared from a side door, which led to another part of the house.

"So you're not going to stay and play a game with aunt," she said; "what makes you in such a hurry?"

"I must go up to college; there's a supper to celebrate our getting head of the river." Patty looked down and pouted a little. Tom took her hand, and said, sentimentally, "Don't be cross, now; you know that I would sooner stay here, don't you?"

She tossed her head, and pulled away her hand, and then changing the subject, said,

"Who's that ugly old fellow who was here again to-night?"

"There was no one older than Miller, and he is rather an admirer of yours. I shall tell him you called him ugly."

"Oh, I don't mean Mr. Miller; you know that well enough," she answered. "I mean him in the old rough coat, who don't talk to any one."

"Ugly old fellow, Patty? Why, you mean Hardy. He's a great friend of mine, and you must like him for my sake."

"I'm sure I won't. I don't like him a bit; he looks so cross at me."

"It's all your fancy. There now, good-night."

"You shan't go, however, till you've given me that handkerchief. You promised it me if you got head of the river."

"Oh! you little story-teller. Why, they are my college colors. I wouldn't part with them for worlds. I'll give you a lock of my hair, and the prettiest handkerchief you can find in Oxford; but not this."

"But I *will* have it, and you *did* promise me it," she said, and put up her hands suddenly, and untied the bow of Tom's neck-handkerchief. He caught her wrists in his hands, and looked down into her eyes, in which, if he saw a little pique at his going, he saw other things which stirred in him strange feelings of triumph and tenderness.

"Well, then you shall pay for it, anyhow," he said.—Why, need I tell what followed?—There was a little struggle; a "Go along, do, Mr. Brown;" and the next minute Tom, minus his handkerchief, was hurrying after his companions; and Patty was watching him from the door, and setting her cap to rights. Then she turned and went back into the bar, and started, and turned red, as she saw Hardy there, still standing in the further corner, opposite her aunt. He finished his glass of ale as she came in, and then passed out wishing them "Good-night."

"Why, aunt," she said, "I thought they were all gone. Who was that sour-looking man?"

"He seems a nice quiet gentleman, my dear," said the old lady, looking up. "I'm sure he's much better than those ones as make so much racket in the bar. But where have you been, Patty?"

"Oh, to the commercial room, aunt. Won't you have a game at cribbage?" and Patty took up the cards and set the board out, the old lady looking at her doubtfully all the time through her spectacles. She was beginning to wish that the college gentlemen wouldn't come so much to the house, though they were very good customers.

Tom, minus his handkerchief, hurried after his comrades, and caught them up before they got to college. They were all there but Hardy, whose absence vexed our hero for a moment; he had hoped that Hardy, now that he was in the boat, would have shaken off all his reserve towards the other men, and blamed him because he had not done so at once. There could be no reason for it but his own oddness, he thought, for every one was full of his praises as they strolled on talking of the race. Miller praised his style, and time, and pluck. "Didn't you feel how the boat sprung when I called on you at the Cherwell?" he said to the Captain. "Drysdale was always dead beat at the Gut, and just like a log in the boat, pretty much like some of the rest of you."

"He's in such good training, too," said Diogenes; "I shall find out how he diets himself."

"We've pretty well done with that, I should hope," said No. 6. "There are only two more nights, and nothing can touch us now."

"Don't be too sure of that," said Miller. "Mind now, all of you, don't let us have any nonsense till the races are over and we are all safe."

And so they talked on till they reached college, and then dispersed to their rooms to wash and dress, and met again in Drysdale's rooms, where supper was awaiting them.

Again Hardy did not appear. Drysdale sent a scout to his rooms, who brought back word that he could not find him; so Drysdale set to work to do the honors of his table, and enjoyed the pleasure of tempting the crew with all sorts of forbidden hot liquors, which he and the rest of the non-professionals imbibed freely. But with Miller's eye on them, and the example of Diogenes and the Captain before them, the rest of the crew exercised an abstemiousness which would have been admirable, had it not been in a great measure compulsory.

It was a great success, this supper at Drysdale's, although knocked up at an hour's notice. The triumph of their boat, had, for the time, the effect of warming up and drawing

out the feeling of fellowship, which is the soul of college life. Though only a few men besides the crew sat down to supper, long before it was cleared away men of every set in the college came in, in the highest spirits, and the room was crowded. For Drysdale sent round to every man in the college with whom he had a speaking acquaintance, and they flocked in and sat where they could, and men talked and laughed with neighbors, with whom, perhaps, they had never exchanged a word since the time when they were freshmen together.

Of course there were speeches, cheered to the echo, and songs, of which the choruses might have been heard in the High-street. At a little before eleven, nevertheless, despite the protestations of Drysdale, and the passive resistance of several of their number, Miller carried off the crew, and many of the other guests went at the same time, leaving their host and a small circle to make a night of it.

Tom went to his room in high spirits, humming the air of one of the songs he had just heard; but he had scarcely thrown his gown on a chair when a thought struck him, and he ran down stairs again and across to Hardy's rooms.

Hardy was sitting with some cold tea poured out, but untasted, before him, and no books open—a very unusual thing with him at night. But Tom either did not or would not notice that there was anything unusual.

He seated himself and began gossiping away as fast as he could, without looking much at the other. He began by recounting all the complimentary things which had been said by Miller and others of Hardy's pulling. Then he went on to the supper party; what a jolly evening they had had; he did not remember anything so pleasant since he had been up, and he retailed the speeches, and named the best songs. "You really ought to have been there. Why didn't you come? Drysdale sent over for you. I'm sure every one wished you had been there. Didn't you get his message?"

"I didn't feel up to going," said Hardy.

"There's nothing the matter, eh?" said Tom, as the thought crossed his mind that perhaps Hardy had hurt himself in the race, as he had not been regularly training.

"No, nothing," answered the other.

Tom tried to make play again, but soon came to an end of his talk. It was impossible to make head against that cold silence. At last he stopped, looked at Hardy for a

minute, who was staring abstractedly at the sword over his mantel-piece, and then said,—

"There *is* something the matrer, though. Don't sit glowering as if you had swallowed a furze bush. Why you haven't been smoking, old boy?" he added, getting up and putting his hand on the others shoulder. "I see that's it. Here, take one of my weeds, they're mild. Miller allows two of these a day."

"No, thank'ee," said Hardy, rousing himself; "Miller hasn't interfered with my smoking, and I *will* have a pipe, for I think I want it."

"Well, I don't see that it does you any good," said Tom, after watching him fill and light, and smoke for some minutes without saying a word. "Here, I've managed the one thing I had at heart. You are in the crew, and we are head of the river, and everybody is praising your rowing up to the skies, and saying that the bump was all your doing. And here I come to tell you, and not a word can I get out of you. Ain't you pleased? Do you think we shall keep our place?" He paused a moment.

"Hang it all, I say," he added, losing all patience; "swear a little if you can't do anything else. Let's hear your voice; it isn't such a tender one that you need keep it all shut up."

Well," said Hardy, making a great effort; "the real fact is I *have* something, and something very serious to say to you."

"Then I'm not going to listen to it," broke in Tom; "I'm not serious, and I won't be serious, and no one shall make me serious to-night. It's no use, so don't look glum. But isn't the ale at 'The Choughs' good? and isn't it a dear little place?"

"It's that place I want to talk to you about," said Hardy, turning his chair suddenly so as to front his visitor. "Now, Brown, we haven't known one another long, but I think I understand you, and I know I like you, and I hope you like me."

"Well, well, well," broke in Tom, "of course I like you, old fellow, or else I shouldn't come poking after you, and wasting so much of your time, and sitting on your cursed hard chairs in the middle of the races. What has liking to do with 'The Cloughs,' or 'The Cloughs' with long faces? You ought to have had another glass of ale there."

"I wish you had never had a glass of ale there," said

Hardy, bolting out his words as if they were red hot. "Brown, you have no right to go to that place."

"Why? said Tom, sitting up in his chair and beginning to be nettled.

"You know why," said Hardy, looking him full in the face, and puffing out huge volumes of smoke. In spite of the bluntness of the attack, there was a yearning look which spread over the rugged brow, and shone out of the deep set eyes of the speaker, which almost conquered Tom. But first pride, and then the consciousness of what was coming next, which began to dawn on him, rose in his heart. It was all he could do to meet that look full, but he managed it, though he flushed to the roots of his hair, as he simply repeated through his set teeth, "Why?"

"I say again," said Hardy, "you know why."

"I see what you mean," said Tom, slowly; "as you say, we have not known one another long; long enough, though, I should have thought, for you to have been more charitable. Why am I not to go to 'The Cloughs'? Because there happens to be a pretty bar maid there? All our crew go, and twenty other men besides."

"Yes; but do any of them go in the sort of way you do? Does she look at any one of them as she does at you?"

"How do I know?"

"That's not fair, or true, or like you, Brown, said Hardy, getting up and beginning to walk up and down the room. "You *do* know that that girl doesn't care a straw for the other men who go there. You *do* know that she is beginning to care for you."

"You seem to know a great deal about it," said Tom; "I don't believe you were ever there before two days ago."

"No, I never was."

"Then I think you needn't be quite so quick at finding fault. If there were anything I didn't wish you to see, do you think I should have taken you there? I tell you she is quite able to take care of herself."

"So I believe," said Hardy; "if she were a mere giddy, light girl, setting her cap at every man who came in, it wouldn't matter so much—for her at any rate. She can take care of herself well enough so far as the rest are concerned, but you know it isn't so with you. You know it now, Brown; tell the truth; any one with half an eye can see it."

"You seem to have made pretty good use of your eyes in these two nights, anyhow," said Tom.

"I don't mind your sneers, Brown," said Hardy as he tramped up and down with his arms locked behind him; "I have taken on myself to speak to you about this; I should be no true friend if I shirked it. I'm four years older than you, and have seen more of the world and of this place than you. You shan't go on with this folly, this sin, for want of warning."

"So it seems," said Tom doggedly. "Now I think I've had warning enough; suppose we drop the subject."

Hardy stopped his walk, and turned on Tom with a look of anger. "Not yet," he said, firmly; "you know best how and why you have done it, but you know that somehow or other you have made that girl like you."

"Suppose I have, what then; whose business is that but mine and hers?"

"It's the business of every one who won't stand by and see the devil's game played under his nose if he can hinder it."

"What right have you to talk about the devil's game to me?" said Tom. "I'll tell you what, if you and I are to keep friends we had better drop this subject."

"If we are to keep friends we must go to the bottom of it. There are only two endings to this sort of business, and you know it as well as I."

"A right and wrong one, eh? and because you call me your friend you assume that my end will be the wrong one."

"I do call you my friend, and I say the end must be the wrong one here. There's no right end. Think of your family. You don't mean to say—you dare not tell me, that you will marry her?"

"I *dare* not tell you!" said Tom, starting up in his turn; "I dare tell you or any man anything I please. But I won't tell you or any man anything on compulsion."

"I repeat," went on Hardy, "you *dare* not say you mean to marry her. You don't mean it—and, as you don't, to kiss her as you did to-night—"

"So you were sneaking behind to watch me!" burst out Tom, chafing with rage, and glad to find any handle for a quarrel. The two men stood fronting one another, the younger writhing with the sense of shame and outraged pride, and longing for a fierce answer—a blow—anything to give vent to the furies which were tearing him.

But at the end of a few seconds the elder answered, calmly and slowly,—

"I will not take those words from any man; you had better leave my rooms."

"If I do, I shall not come back till you have altered your opinions."

"You need not come back till you have altered yours."

The next moment Tom was in the passage; the next, striding up and down the side of the inner quadrangle in the pale moonlight.

Poor fellow! it was no pleasant walking ground for him. Is it worth our while to follow him up and down in his tramp? We have most of us walked the like marches at one time or another of our lives. The memory of them is by no means one which we can dwell on with pleasure. Times they were of blinding and driving storm, and howling winds, out of which voices as of evil spirits spoke close in our ears—tauntingly, temptingly, whispering to the mischievous wild beast which lurks in the bottom of all our hearts, now, "Rouse up! art thou a man and darest not do this thing?" now, "Rise, kill and eat—it is thine, wilt thou not take it? Shall the flimsy scruples of this teacher, or the sanctified cant of that, bar thy way, and balk thee of thine own? Thou has strength to brave them—to brave all things in earth, or heaven, or hell; put out thy strength and be a man!"

Then did not the wild beast within us shake itself, and feel its power, sweeping away all the "Thou shalt not's" which the law wrote up before us in letters of fire, with the "I *will*" of hardy, godless, self-assertion? And all the while—which alone made the storm really dreadful to us—was there not the still small voice—never to be altogether silenced by the roarings of the tempest of passion, by the evil voices, by our own violent attempts to stifle it—the still small voice appealing to the man, the true man, within us, which is made in the image of God—calling on him to assert his dominion over the wild beast—to obey, and conquer, and live? Ay! and though we may have followed the other voices, have we not, while following them, confessed in our hearts, that all true strength, and nobleness, and manliness, was to be found in the other path? Do I say that most of us have had to tread this path, and fight this battle? Surely I might have said all of us; all, at least, who

have passed the bright days of their boyhood. The clear and keen intellect no less than the dull and heavy; the weak, the cold, the nervous, no less than the strong and passionate of body. The arms and the field have been divers; can have been the same, I suppose, to no two men, but the battle must have been the same to all. One here and there may have had a foretaste of it as a boy; but it is the young man's battle, and not the boy's, thank God for it! That most hateful and fearful of all realities, call it by what name we will—self, the natural man, the old Adam—must have risen up before each of us in early manhood, if not sooner, challenging the true man within us, to which the Spirit of God is speaking, to a struggle for life or death.

Gird yourself, then, for the fight, my young brother, and take up the pledge which was made for you when you were a helpless child. This world, and all others, time and eternity, for you hang upon the issue. This enemy must be met and vanquished—not finally, for no man while on earth I suppose, can say that he is slain; but, when once known and recognized, met and vanquished he must be, by God's help in this and that encounter, before you can be truly called a man; before you can really enjoy any one even of this world's good things.

This strife was no light one for our hero on the night in his life at which we have arrived. The quiet sky overhead, the quiet solemn old buildings, under the shadow of which he stood, brought him no peace. He fled from them into his own rooms; he lighted his candles and tried to read, and force the whole matter from his thoughts; but it was useless: back it came again and again. The more impatient of its presence he became, the less could he shake it off. Some decision he must make; what should it be? He could have no peace till it was taken. The veil had been drawn aside thoroughly, and once for all. Twice he was on the point of returning to Hardy's rooms to thank him, confess, and consult; but the tide rolled back again. As the truth of the warning sank deeper and deeper into him, the irritation gainst him who had uttered it grew also. He could not and would not be fair yet. It is no easy thing for any one of us to put the whole burden of any folly or sin on our own backs all at once. "If he had done it in any other way," thought Tom, "I might have thanked him."

Another effort to shake off the whole question. Down into the quadrangle again; lights in Drysdale's rooms. He goes up, and finds the remains of the supper, tankards full of egg-flip and cardinal, and a party playing at *vingt-un*. He drinks freely, careless of training or boat-racing, anxious only to drown thought. He sits down to play. The boistrous talk of some, the eager keen looks of others, jar on him equally. One minute he is absent, the next boistrous, then irritable, then moody. A college card-party is no place to-night for him. He loses his money, is disgusted at last, and gets to his own rooms by midnight; goes to bed feverish, dissatisfied with himself, with all the world. The inexorable question pursues him even into the strange helpless land of dreams, demanding a decision, when he has no longer power of will to choose either good or evil.

But how fared it all this time with the physician? Alas! little better than with his patient. His was the deeper and more sensitive nature.. Keenly conscious of his own position, he had always avoided any but the most formal intercourse with the men in his college whom he would have liked most to live with. This was the first friendship he had made amongst them, and he valued it accordingly; and now it seemed to lie at his feet in hopeless fragments, and cast down too by his own hand. Bitterly he blamed himself over and over again, as he recalled every word that had passed—not for having spoken—that he felt had been a sacred duty—but for the harshness and suddenness with which he seemed to himself to have done it.

One touch of gentleness or sympathy, and I might have won him. As it was, how could he have met me otherwise than he did—hard word for hard word, hasty answer for proud reproof? Can I go to him and recall it all? No! I can't trust myself; I shall only make matters worse. Besides, he may think that the servitor—Ah! am I there again? The old sore, self, self, self! I nurse my own pride; I value it more than my friend; and yet—no, no! I cannot do, though I think I could die for him. The sin, if sin there must be, be on my head. Would to God I could bear the sting of it! But there will be none—how can I fear? He is too true, too manly. Rough and brutal as my words have been, they have shown him the gulf. He will, he must escape it. But will he ever come back to me? I care not, so he escape."

How can my poor words follow the strong loving man in the wrestlings of his spirit, till far on in the quiet night he laid the whole before the Lord and slept! Yes, my brother, even so: the old, old story; but start not at the phrase, though you may never have found its meaning—He laid the whole before the Lord in prayer, for his friend, for himself, for the whole world.

And you, too, if ever you are tried as he was—as every man must be in one way or another—must learn to do the like with every burthen on your soul, if you would not have it hanging round you heavily, and ever more heavily, and dragging you down lower and lower till your dying day.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE STORM RAGES.

HARDY was early in the chapel the next morning. It was his week for pricking in. Every man who entered—from the early men who strolled in quietly while the bell was still ringing, to the hurrying, half-dressed loiterers who crushed in as the porter was closing the doors, and disturbed the congregation in the middle of the confession—gave him a turn (as the expressive phrase is), and every turn only ended in disappointment. He put by his list at last, when the doors were fairly shut, with a sigh. He had half expected to see Tom come into morning chapel with a face from which he might have gathered hope that his friend had taken the right path. But Tom did not come at all, and Hardy felt it was a bad sign.

They did not meet till the evening, at the river, when the boat went down for a steady pull, and then Hardy saw at once that all was going wrong. Neither spoke to or looked at the other. Hardy expected some one to remark it, but nobody did. After the pull they walked up, and Tom as usual led the way, as if nothing had happened, into "The Choughs." Hardy paused for a moment, and then went in too, and stayed till the rest of the crew left. Tom deliberately stayed after them all. Hardy turned for a moment as he was leaving the bar, and saw him settling himself down in his chair with an air of defiance, meant evidently

for him, which would have made most men angry. He was irritated for a moment, and then was filled with ruth for the poor wrong-headed youngster who was heaping up coals of fire for his own head. In his momentary anger Hardy said to himself, "Well, I have done what I can; now he must go his own way;" but such a thought was soon kicked in disgrace from his noble and well-disciplined mind. He resolved, that, let it cost what it might in the shape of loss of time and trial of temper, he would leave no stone unturned, and spare no pains, to deliver his friend of yesterday from the slough into which he was plunging. How he might best work for this end occupied his thoughts as he walked towards college.

Tom sat on at "The Choughs," glorifying himself in the thought that now, at any rate, he had shown Hardy that he wasn't to be dragooned into doing or not doing anything. He had had a bad time of it all day, and his good angel had fought hard for victory; but self-will was too strong for the time. When he stayed behind the rest, it was more out of bravado than from any defined purpose of pursuing what he tried to persuade himself was an innocent flirtation. When he left the house some hours after he was deeper in the toils than ever, and dark clouds were gathering over his heart. From that time he was an altered man, and altering as rapidly for the worse in body as in mind. Hardy saw the change in both, and groaned over it in secret. Miller's quick eye detected the bodily change. After the next race he drew Tom aside, and said,—

"Why, Brown, what's the matter? What have you been about? You're breaking down. Hold on, man; there's only one more night."

"Never fear," said Tom, proudly, "I shall last it out."

And in the last race he did his work again, though it cost him more than all the preceding ones put together, and when he got out of the boat he could scarcely walk or see. He felt a fierce kind of joy in his own distress, and wished that there were more races to come. But Miller, as he walked up arm-in-arm with the Captain, took a different view of the subject.

"Well, it's all right, you see," said the Captain; "but we're not a boat's length better than Oriel over the course after all. How was it we bumped them? If anything, they drew a little on us to-night."

"Ay, half a boat's length, I should say," answered Miller. "I'm uncommonly glad it's over; Brown is going all to pieces; he wouldn't stand another race, and we haven't a man to put in his place."

"It's odd, too," said the Captain; "I put him down as a laster, and he has trained well. Perhaps he has overdone it a little. However, it don't matter now."

So the races were over; and that night a great supper was held in St. Ambrose Hall, to which were bidden, and came, the crews of all the boats from Exeter upwards. The Dean, with many misgivings and cautions, had allowed the hall to be used, on pressure from Miller and Jervis. Miller was a bachelor and had taken a good degree, and Jervis bore a high character and was expected to do well in the schools. So the poor Dean gave in to them, extracting many promises in exchange for his permission: and flitted uneasily about all the evening in his cap and gown, instead of working on at his edition of the Fathers, which occupied every minute of his leisure, and was making an old man of him before his time.

From eight to eleven the fine old pointed windows of St. Ambrose Hall blazed with light, and the choruses of songs, and the cheers which followed the short intervals of silence which the speeches made, rang out over the quadrangles, and made the poor Dean amble about in a state of nervous bewilderment. Inside there was hearty feasting, such as had not been seen there, for aught I know, since the day when the king came back to "enjoy his own again." The one old cup, relic of the Middle Ages, which had survived the civil wars,—St. Ambrose's had been a right loyal college, and the plate had gone without a murmur into Charles the First's war-chest,—went round and round; and rival crews pledged one another out of it, and the massive tankards of a later day, in all good faith and good fellowship. Mailed knights, grave bishops, royal persons of either sex, and "other our benefactors," looked down on the scene from their heavy gilded frames, and, let us hope, not unkindly. All passed off well and quietly; the out-college men were gone, the lights were out, and the butler had locked the hall door by a quarter past eleven, and the Dean returned in peace to his own rooms.

Had Tom been told a week before that he would not have enjoyed that night, that it would not have been amongst the happiest and proudest of his life, he would

have set his informer down as a madman. As it was, he never once rose to the spirit of the feast, and wished it all over a dozen times. He deserved not to enjoy it; but not so Hardy, who was nevertheless almost as much out of tune as Tom; though the University coxswain had singled him out, named him in his speech, sat by him and talked to him for a quarter of an hour, and asked him to go to the Henley and Thames regattas in the Oxford crew.

The next evening, as usual, Tom found himself at "The Choughs" with half a dozen others. Patty was in the bar by herself, looking prettier than ever. One by one the rest of the men dropped off, the last saying, "Are you coming, Brown?" and being answered in the negative.

He sat still, watching Patty as she flitted about, washing up the ale glasses and putting them on their shelves, and getting out her work basket; and then she came and sat down in her aunt's chair opposite him, and began stitching away demurely at an apron she was making. Then he broke silence,—

"Where's your aunt to-night, Patty?"

"Oh, she has gone away for a few days, for a visit to some friends."

"You and I will keep house, then, together; you shall teach me all the tricks of the trade. I shall make a famous barman, don't you think?"

"You must learn to behave better, then. But I promised aunt to shut up at nine; so you must go when it strikes. Now promise me you will go."

"Go at nine! what, in half an hour? The first evening I have ever had a chance of spending alone with you; do you think it likely?" and he looked into her eyes. She turned away with a slight shiver, and a deep blush.

His nervous system had been so unusally excited in the last few days, that he seemed to know everything that was passing in her mind. He took her hand. "Why, Patty, you're not afraid of me, surely?" he said, gently.

"No, not when you're like you are now. But you frightened me just this minute. I never saw you look so before. Has anything happened to you?"

"No, nothing. Now then, we're going to have a jolly evening, and play Darby and Joan together," he said, turning away, and going to the bar window; "shall I shut up, Patty?"

"No, it isn't nine yet; somebody may come in."

"That's just why I mean to put the shutters up; I don't want anybody."

"Yes, but I do, though. Now I declare, Mr. Brown, if you go on shutting up, I'll run into the kitchen and sit with Dick."

"Why will you call me 'Mr. Brown'?"

"Why, what should I call you?"

"Tom, of course."

"Oh, I never! one would think you was my brother," said Patty, looking up with a pretty pertness which she had a most bewitching way of putting on. Tom's rejoinder, and the little squabble which they had afterward about where her work-table should stand, and other such matters, may be passed over. At last he was brought to reason, and to anchor opposite his enchantress, the work-table between them; and he sat leaning back in his chair and watching her, as she stitched away without ever lifting her eyes. He was in no hurry to break the silence. The position was particularly fascinating to him, for he had scarcely ever yet had a good look at her before, without fear of attracting attention, or being interrupted. At last he roused himself.

"Any of our men been here to-day, Patty?" he said, sitting up.

"There now, I've won," she laughed; "I said to myself I wouldn't speak first, and I haven't. What a time you were. I thought you would never begin."

"You're a little goose! Now I begin then; who've been here to-day?"

"Of your college? let me see;" and she looked away across to the bar window, pricking her needle into the table. "There was Mr. Drysdale and some others called for a glass of ale as they passed, going out driving. Then there was Mr. Smith and them from the boats about four; and that ugly one—I can't mind his name—"

"What, Hardy?"

"Yes, that's it; he was here about half-past six, and—"

"What, Hardy here after hall?" interrupted Tom, utterly astonished.

"Yes, after your dinner up at college. He's been here two or three times lately."

"The deuce he has!"

"Yes, and he talks so pleasant to aunt, too. I'm sure he

is a very nice gentleman, after all. He sat and talked to-night for half an hour, I should think."

"What did he talk about?" said Tom, with a sneer.

"Oh, he asked me whether I had a mother, and where I came from, and all about my bringing up, and made me feel quite pleasant. He is so nice and quiet and respectful, not like most of you. I'm going to like him very much, as you told me."

"I don't tell you so now."

"But you did say he was your great friend."

"Well, he isn't that now."

"What, have you quarreled?"

"Yes."

"Dear, dear; how odd you gentlemen are!"

"Why, it isn't a very odd thing for men to quarrel, is it?"

"No, not in the public room. They're always quarreling there, over their drink and the bagatelle-board; and Dick has to turn them out. But gentlemen ought to know better."

"They don't, you see, Patty."

"But what did you quarrel about?"

"Guess."

"How can I guess? What was it about?"

"About you."

"About me!" she said, looking up from her work in wonder. "How could you quarrel about me?"

"Well, I'll tell you; he said I had no right to come here. You won't like him after that, will you Patty?"

"I don't know, I'm sure," said Patty, going on with her work, and looking troubled.

They sat still for some minutes. Evil thoughts crowded into Tom's head. He was in the humor for thinking evil thoughts, and, putting the worst construction on Hardy's visits, fancied he came there as his rival. He did not trust himself to sp ak till he had mastered his precious discovery, and put it away in the back of his heart, and weighed it down there with a good covering of hatred and revenge, to be brought out as occasion should serve. He was plunging down rapidly enough now; but he had new motives for making the most of his time, and never played his cards better or made more progress. When a man sits down to such a game, the devil will take good care he sha'n't want cunning or strength. It was ten o'clock instead of nine be-

fore he left, which he did with a feeling of triumph. Poor Patty remained behind, and shut up the bar, while Dick was locking the front door, her heart in a flutter, and her hands shaking. She hardly knew whether to laugh or cry; she felt the change which had come over him, and was half fascinated and half repelled by it.

Tom walked quickly back to college, in a mood which I do not care to describe. The only one of his thoughts which my readers need be troubled with, put itself into some such words as these in his head:—"So, it's Abingdon fair next Thursday, and she has half-promised to go with me. I know I can make it certain. Who'll be going besides? Drysdale, I'll be bound. I'll go and see him."

On entering college he went straight to Drysdale's rooms, and drank deeply, and played high into the short hours of the night, but found no opportunity of speaking.

Deeper and deeper yet for the next few days, downwards and ever faster downwards he plunged, the light getting fainter and ever fainter above his head. Little good can come of dwelling on those days. He left off pulling, shunned his old friends, and lived with the very worst men he knew in college, who were ready enough to let him share all their brutal orgies.

Drysdale, who was often present, wondered at the change, which he saw plainly enough. He was sorry for it in his way, but it was no business of his. He began to think that Brown was a good enough fellow before, but would make a devilish disagreeable one if he was going to turn fast man.

At "The Choughs" all went on as if the downward path knew how to make itself smooth. Now that the races were over, and so many other attractions were going on in Oxford, very few men came in to interfere with him. He was scarcely ever away from Patty's side, in the evenings while her aunt was absent, and gained more and more power over her. He might have had some compassion, but that he was spurred on by hearing how Hardy haunted the place now, at times when he could not be there. He felt that there was an influence struggling with his in the girl's mind; he laid it to Hardy's door, and imputed it still more and more to motives as base as his own. But Abingdon fair was coming on Thursday. When he left "The Choughs" on Tuesday night, he had extracted a promise from Patty to accompany him there, and had arranged their place of meeting.

All that remained to be done was to see if Drysdale was going. Somehow he felt a disinclination to go alone with Patty. Drysdale was the only man of those he was now living with to whom he felt the least attraction. In a vague way he clung to him; and though he never faced the thought of what he was about fairly, yet it passed through his mind that even in Drysdale's company he would be safer than if alone. It was all pitiless, blind, wild work, without rudder or compass; the wish that nothing very bad might come out of it all, however,came up in spite of him now and again, and he looked to Drysdale, and longed to become even as he.

Drysdale was going. He was very reserved on the subject, but at last confessed that he was not going alone. Tom persisted. Drysdale was too lazy and careless to keep anything from a man who was bent on knowing it. In the end it was arranged that he should drive Tom out the next afternoon. He did so. They stopped at a small public house some two miles out of Oxford. The cart was put up, and after carefully scanning the neighborhood they walked quickly to the door of a pretty retired cottage. As they entered, Drysdale said,

"By Jove, I thought I caught a glimpse of your friend Hardy at that turn."

"Friend ! he's no friend of mine."

"But didn't you see him?"

"No."

They reached college again between ten and eleven, and parted, each to his own rooms.

To his surprise, Tom found a candle burning on his table. Round the candle was tied a piece of string, at the end of which hung a note. Who ever had put it there had clearly been anxious that he should in no case miss it when he came in. He took it up and saw that it was in Hardy's hand. He paused, and trembled as he stood. Then with an effort he broke the seal and read—

"I must speak once more. To-morrow it may be too late. If you go to Abingdon fair with her in the company of Drysdale and his mistress, or, I believe, in any company, you will return a scoundrel, and she—; in the name of the honor of your mother and sister, in the name of God, I warn you. May He help you through it.—JOHN HARDY.

Here we will drop the curtain for the next hour. At the end of that time, Tom staggered out of his room, down the staircase, across the quadrangle, up Drysdale's staircase. He paused at the door to gather some strength, ran his hands through his hair, and arranged his coat; notwithstanding, when he entered, Drysdale started to his feet, upsetting Jack from his comfortable coil on the sofa.

"Why, Brown, you're ill; have some brandy," he said, and went to his cupboard for the bottle.

Tom leant his arm on the fireplace; his head on it. The other hung down by his side, and Jack licked it, and he loved the dog as he felt the caress. Then Drysdale came to his side with a glass of brandy, which he took and tossed off as though it had been water. "Thank you," he said, and as Drysdale went back with the bottle, reached a large armchair and sat down in it.

"Drysdale, I sha'n't go with you to Abingdon fair to-morrow."

"Hullo! what, has the lovely Patty thrown you over?" said Drysdale, turning from the cupboard, and resuming his lounge on the sofa.

"No:" he sank back into the chair, on the arms of which his elbows rested, and put his hands up before his face, pressing them against his burning temples. Drysdale looked at him hard, but said nothing; and there was a dead silence of a minute or so, broken only by Tom's heavy breathing, which he labored in vain to control.

"No," he repeated at last, and the remaining words came out slowly as they were trying to steady themselves, "but, by God, Drysdale I *can't* take her with you, and that—" a dead pause.

"The young lady you met to-night, eh?"

Tom nodded, but said nothing.

"Well, old fellow," said Drysdale, "now you've made up your mind, I tell you, I'm devilish glad of it. I'm no saint, as you know, but I think it would have been a d——d shame if you had taken her with us."

"Thank you," said Tom, and pressed his fingers tighter on his forehead; and he *did* feel thankful for the words, though coming from such a man, they went into him like coals of fire.

Again there was a long pause, Tom sitting as before. Drysdale got up and strolled up and down his room, with his hands in the pockets of his silk-lined lounging coat, tak-

ing at each turn a steady look at the other. Presently he stopped, and took his cigar out of his mouth. "I say, Brown," he said, after another minute's contemplation of the figure before him, which bore such an unmistakable impress of wretchedness, that it made him quite uncomfortable, "why don't you cut that concern?"

"How do you mean?" said Tom.

"Why that 'Choughs' business—I'll be hanged if it won't kill you, or make a devil of you before long, if you go on with it."

"It's not far from that now."

"So I see—and I'll tell you what, you're not the sort of fellow to go in for this kind of thing. You'd better leave it to cold-blooded brutes, like some we know—I needn't mention names."

"I'm awfully wretched, Drysdale; I've been a brute myself to you and everybody of late."

"Well, I own I don't like the new side of you. Now make up your mind to cut the whole concern, old fellow," he said, coming up goodnaturedly, and putting his hand on Tom's shoulder, "it's hard to do, I dare say, but you had better make a plunge and get it over. There's wickedness enough going about without your helping to shove another one into it."

Tom groaned as he listened, but he felt that the man was trying to help him in his own way, and according to his light, as Drysdale went on expounding his own curious code of morality. When it was ended, he shook Drysdale's hand, and wishing him good night, went back to his own rooms. The first step upwards towards the light had been made, for he felt thoroughly humbled before the man on whom he had expended in his own mind so much patronizing pity for the last half year—whom he had been fancying he was influencing for good.

During the long hours of the night the scenes of the last few hours, of the last few days, came back to him and burnt into his soul. The gulf yawned before him now plain enough, open at his feet—black, ghastly. He shuddered at it, wondering if he should even yet fall in, felt wildly about for strength to stand firm, to retrace his steps; but found it not. He found not yet the strength he was in search of, but in the grey morning he wrote a short note:—

"I shall not be able to take you to Abingdon fair to-day. You will not see me perhaps for some days. I am not well.

I am very sorry. Don't think that I am changed. Don't be unhappy, or I don't know what I may do." There was no address and no signature to the note.

When the gates opened he hurried out of the college, and, having left it and a shilling with Dick (whom he found clearing the yard, and much astonished at his appearance, and who promised to deliver it to Patty with his own hands before eight o'clock), he got back again to his own rooms, went to bed, worn out in mind and body, and slept till mid-day.

CHAPTER XVII.

NEW GROUND.

My readers have now been steadily at Oxford for six months without moving. Most people find such a spell of the place without a change quite as much as they care to take; perhaps too, it may do our hero good to let him alone for a little, that he may have time to look steadily into the pit which he has been so near falling down, which is still yawning awkwardly in his path; moreover, the exigencies of a story teller must lead him away from home now and then. Like the rest of us his family must have change of air, or he has to go off to see a friend properly married, or a connexion buried; to wear white or black gloves with or for some one, carrying such sympathy as he can with him, so that he may come back from every journey, however short, with a wider horizon. Yes; to come back home after every stage of life's journeying with a wider horizon—more in sympathy with men and nature, knowing ever more of the righteous and eternal laws which govern them, and of the righteous and loving will which is above all, and around all, and beneath all—this must be the end and aim of all of us, or we shall be wandering about blindfold, and spending time and labor and journey-money on that which profiteth nothing. So now I must ask my readers to forget the old buildings and quadrangles of the fairest of England's cities, the caps and the gowns, the reading and rowing for a short space, and take a flight with me to other scenes and pastures new,

The nights are pleasant in May, short and pleasant for travel. We will leave the ancient city asleep, and do our flight in the night to save time. Trust yourself then to the story-teller's aerial machine. It is but a rough affair, I own, rough and humble, unfitted for high or great flights, with no gilded panels or dainty cushions, or C-springs—not that we shall care about springs, by the way, until we alight on terra firma again—still, there is much to be learned in a third-class carriage if we will only not look while in it for cushions and fine panels, and forty miles an hour traveling, and will not be shocked at our fellow passengers for being weak in their h's and smelling of fustian. Mount in it, then, you who will, after this warning; the fares are holiday fares, the tickets return tickets. Take with you nothing but the poet's luggage,

> "A smile for Hope, a tear for Pain,
> A breath to swell the voice of Prayer."

and may you have a pleasant journey, for it is time that the stoker should be looking to his going gear.

So now we rise slowly in the moonlight from St. Ambrose's quadrangle, and, when we are clear of the clock-tower, steer away southwards, over Oxford City and all its sleeping wisdom and folly, over street and past spire, over Christ Church and the canons' houses, and the fountain in Tom quad; over St. Aldate's and the river, along which the moonbeams lie in a pathway of twinkling silver, over the railway sheds—no, there was then no railway, but only the quiet fields and footpaths of Hincksey hamlet. Well, no matter; at any rate, the hills beyond, and Bagley Wood, were there then as now: and over hills and wood we rise, catching the purr of the night-jar, the trill of the nightingale, and the first crow of the earliest cock-pheasant, as he stretches his jewelled wings, conscious of his strength and his beauty, heedless of the fellows of St. John's, who slumber within sight of his perch, on whose hospitable board he shall one day lie, prone on his back, with fair larded breast turned upwards for the carving-knife, having crowed his last crow. He knows it not; what matters it to him? If he knew it, could a Bagley Wood cock-pheasant desire a better ending?

We pass over the vale beyond; hall and hamlet, church, and meadow, and copse, folded in mist and shadow below us, each hamlet holding in its bosom the material of three-volumed novels by the dozen, if we could only pull off the

roofs of the houses and look steadily into the interiors; but our destination is farther yet. The faint white streak behind the distant Chilterns reminds us that we have no time for gossip by the way; May nights are short, and the sun will be up by four. No matter; our journey will now be soon over, for the broad vale is crossed, and the chalk hills and downs beyond. Larks quiver up by us, "higher, ever higher," hastening up to get a first glimpse of the coming monarch, careless of food, flooding the fresh air with song. Steady plodding rooks labour along below us, and lively starlings rush by on the look-out for the early worm; lark and swallow, rook and starling, each on his appointed round. The sun arises, and they get them to it; he is up now, and these breezy uplands over which we hang are swimming in the light of horizontal rays, though the shadows and mists still lie on the wooded dells which slope away southwards.

Here let us bring to, over the village of Englebourn, and try to get acquainted with the outside of the place before the good folk are about, and we have to go down among them and their sayings and doings.

The village lies on the southern slopes of the Berkshire hills, on the opposite side to that under which our hero was born. Another soil altogether is here, we remark in the first place. This is no chalk, this high knoll which rises above—one may almost say hangs over—the village, crowned with Scotch firs, its sides tufted with gorse and heather. It is the Hawk's Lynch, the favorite resort of Englebourn folk, who come up for the view, for the air, because their fathers and mothers came up before them, because they came up themselves as children—from an instinct which moves them all in leisure hours and Sunday evenings, when the sun shines and the birds sing, whether they care for view or air or not. Something guides all their feet hitherward; the children, to play hide-and-seek and look for nests in the gorse-bushes; young men and maidens, to saunter and look and talk, as they will till the world's end—or as long, at any rate, as the Hawk's Lynch and Englebourn last—and to cut their initials, inclosed in a true lover's knot, on the short rabbit's turf; steady married couples, to plod along together consulting on hard times and growing families; even old tottering men, who love to sit at the feet of the firs, with chins leaning on their sticks, prattling of days long past, to any one who will listen, or

looking silently with dim eyes into the summer air, feeling perhaps in their spirits after a wider and more peaceful view which will soon open for them. A common knoll, open to all, up in the silent air, well away from every-day Englebourn life, with the Hampshire range and the distant Beacon Hill lying soft on the horizon, and nothing higher between you and the southern sea, what a blessing the Hawk's Lynch is to the village folk, one and all! May Heaven and a thankless soil long preserve it and them from an inclosure under the Act!

There is much temptation lying about, though, for the inclosures of the world. The rough common land stretches over the whole of the knoll, and down to its base, and away along the hills behind, of which the Hawk's Lynch is an outlying spur. Rough common land, broken only by pine woods of a few acres each in extent, an occasional woodman's or squatter's cottage and little patch of attempted garden. But immediately below, and on each flank of the spur, and half-way up the slopes, come small farm inclosures, breaking here and there the belt of woodlands, which generally lies between the rough wild upland, and the cultivated country below. As you stand on the knoll you can see common land just below you at its foot narrow into a mere road, with a border of waste on each side which runs into Englebourn street. At the end of the straggling village stands the church with its square tower, a lofty grey stone building, with bits of fine decorated architecture about it, but much of churchwarden Gothic supervening. The churchyard is large, and the graves, as you can see plainly even from this distance, are all crowded on the southern side. The rector's sheep are feeding in the northern part, nearest to us, and a small gate at one corner opens into his garden. The Rectory looks large and comfortable, and its grounds well cared for and extensive, with a rookery of elms at the lawn's end. It is the chief house of the place, for there is no resident squire. The principal street contains a few shops, some dozen, perhaps, in all; and several farm houses lie a little back from it, with gardens in front, and yards and barns and orchards behind; and there are two public-houses. The other dwellings are mere cottages, and very bad ones for the most part, with floors below the level of the street. Almost every house in the village is thatched, which adds to the beauty though not to the comfort of the place. The rest of the population

who do not live in the street are dotted about the neighboring lanes, chiefly towards the west, on our right as we look down from the Hawk's Lynch. On this side the country is more open, and here most of the farmers live, as we may see by the number of homesteads. And there is a small brook on that side too, which with careful damning is made to turn a mill, there where you see the clump of poplars. On our left as we look down, the country to the east of the village is thickly wooded; but we can see that there is a village green on that side, and a few scattered cottages, the farthest of which stands looking out like a little white eye, from the end of a dense copse.

Beyond it there is no sign of habitation for some two miles; then you can see the tall chimneys of a great house, and a well timbered park round it. The Grange is not in Englebourn parish—happily for that parish, one is sorry to remark. It must be a very bad squire who does not do more good than harm by living in a country village. But there are very bad squires, and the owner of the Grange is one of them. He is, however, for the most part, an absentee, so that we are little concerned with him, and in fact, have only to notice this one of his bad habits, that he keeps that long belt of woodlands, which runs into Englebourn parish, and comes almost up to the village, full of hares and pheasants. He has only succeeded to the property some three our four years, and yet the head of game on the estate, and above all in the woods has trebled or quadrupled. Pheasants by hundreds are reared under hens, from eggs bought in London, and run about the keepers' houses as tame as barn door fowls all the summer. When the first party comes down for the first battue early in October, it is often as much as the beaters can do to persuade these pampered fowls that they are wild game, whose duty it is to get up and fly away, and be shot at. However, they soon learn more of the world--such of them, at least, as are not slain —and are unmistakable wild birds in a few days. Then they take to roosting farther from their old haunts, more in the outskirts of the woods, and the time comes for other's besides the squire's guests to take their education in hand, and teach pheasants at least that they are no native British birds. These are a wild set, living scattered about the wild country; turf cutters, broom-makers, squatters, with indefinite occupations, and nameless habits, a race hated of keepers and constables. These have increased and flourished of

late years; and, notwithstanding the imprisonments and transportations which deprive them periodically of the most enterprisiug members of their community, one and all give thanks for the day when the owner of the Grange took to pheasant breeding. If the demoralization stopped with them, little harm might come of it, as they would steal fowls in the homesteads if there were no pheasants in the woods—which latter, are less dangerous to get, and worth more when gotten. But, unhappily, this method of earning a livelihood has strong attractions, and is catching; and the cases of farm labourers who get into trouble about game are more frequent season by season in the neighbouring parishes, and Englebourn is no better than the rest. And the men are not likely to be much discouraged from these practices, or taught better by the farmers; for, if there is one thing more than another that drives that sturdy set of men, the Englebourn yeomen, into a frenzy, it is talk of the game in the Grange covers. Not that they dislike sport; they like it too well, and, moreover, have been used to their fair share of it. For the late squire left the game entirely in their hands. "You know best how much game your land will carry without serious damage to the crops," he used to say. "I like to show my friends a fair day's sport when they are with me, and have enough game to supply the house and make a few presents. Beyond that it is no affair of mine. You can course whenever you like; and let me know when you want a day's shooting, and you shall have it." Under this system the yeomen became keen sportsmen, they and all their laborers took a keen interest in preserving and the whole district would have risen on a poacher. The keeper's place became a sinecure, and the squire had as much game as he wanted without expense, and was, moreover, the most popular man in the county. Even after the new man came, and all was changed, the mere revocation of their sporting liberties, and the increase of game, unpopular as these things were, would not alone have made the farmers so bitter, and have raised that sense of outraged justice in them. But with these changes came in a custom new in the country—the custom of selling the game. At first the report was not believed; but soon it became notorious that no head of game from the Grange estates was ever given away, that not only did the tenants never get a brace of birds or a hare, or the labourers a rabbit, but not one of the gentlemen who helped to kill the

game ever found any of the bag in his dog-cart after the day's shooting. Nay, so shameless had the system become and so highly was the art of turning the game to account cultivated at the Grange, that the keepers sold powder and shot to any of the guests who had emptied their own belts or flasks at something over the market retail price. The light cart drove to the market-town twice a week in the season, loaded heavily with game, but more heavily with the hatred and scorn of the farmers; and, if deep and bitter curses could break patent axles or necks, the new squire and his game-cart would not long have vexed the country-side. As it was, not a man but his own tenants would salute him in the market-place; and these repaid themselves for the unwilling courtesy by bitter reflections on a squire who was mean enough to pay his butcher's and poulterer's bills out of their pockets.

Alas, that the manly instinct of sport which is so strong in all of us Englishmen—which sends Oswell's single handed against the mightiest beasts that walk the earth, and takes the poor cockney journeyman out a ten miles' walk almost before daylight, on the rare summer holiday mornings, to angle with rude tackle in reservoir or canal—should be dragged through such mire as this in many an English shire in our day. If English landlords want to go on shooting game much longer, they must give up selling it. For if selling game becomes the rule, and not the exception (as it seems likely to do before long), good-bye to to sport in England. Every man who loves his country more than his pleasure or his pocket—and, thank God, that includes the great majority of us yet, however much we may delight in gun and rod, let any demagogue in the land say what he pleases—will cry, "Down with it," and lend a hand to put it down for ever.

But, to return to our perch on the Hawk's Lynch above Englebourn village. The rector is the fourth of his race who holds the family living—a kind, easy-going, gentlemanly old man, a Doctor of Divinity, as becomes his position, though he only went into orders because there was the living ready for him. In his day he had been a good magistrate and neighbour, living with and much in the same way as, the squires round about. But his contemporaries had dropped off one by one; his own health had long been failing; his wife was dead; and the young generation did not seek him. His work and the parish had no real hold

on him; so he had nothing to fall back on, and had become a confirmed invalid, seldom leaving the house and garden, even to go to church, and thinking more of his dinner and his health than of all other things in earth or heaven.

The only child who remained at home with him was a daughter, a girl of nineteen or thereabouts, whose acquaintance we shall make presently, and who was doing all that good heart and sound head prompted in nursing an old hypochondriac, and filling his place in the parish. But though the old man was weak and selfish, he was kind in his way, and ready to give freely or do anything that his daughter suggested for the good of his people, provided the trouble were taken off his shoulders. In the year before our tale opens, he had allowed some thirty acres of his glebe to be parcelled out in allotments amongst the poor; and his daughter spent almost what she pleased in clothing-clubs, and sick-clubs, and the school, without a word from him. Whenever he did remonstrate, she managed to get what she wanted out of the house-money, or her own allowance.

We must make acquaintance with such other of the inhabitants as it concerns us to know in the course of the story; for it is broad daylight, and the villagers will be astir directly. Folk who go to bed before nine, after a hard day's work, get into the habit of turning out soon after the sun calls them. So now, descending from the Hawk's Lynch, we will alight at the east end of Englebourn, opposite the little white cottage which looks out at the end of the great wood, near the village green

Soon after five on that bright Sunday morning, Harry Winburn unbolted the door of his mother's cottage, and stepped out in his shirt-sleeves on to the little walk in front paved with pebbles. Perhaps some of my readers will recognize the name of an old acquaintance, and wonder how he got here; so let us explain at once. Soon after our hero went to school, Harry's father had died of a fever. He had been a journeyman blacksmith, and in the receipt, consequently, of rather better wages than generally fall to the lot of the peasantry, but not enough to leave much of a margin over current expenditure. Moreover, the Winburns had always been open-handed with whatever money they had; so that all he left for his widow and child, of worldly goods, was their "few sticks" of furniture, £5 in the savings' bank, and the money from his burial-club,

which was not more than enough to give him a creditable funeral—that object of honorable ambition to all the independent poor. He left, however, another inheritance to them, which is in price above rubies, neither shall silver be named in comparison thereof,—the inheritance of an honest name, of which his widow was proud, and which was not likely to suffer in her hands.

After the funeral she removed to Englebourn, her own native village, and kept her old father's house till his death. He was one of the woodmen to the Grange, and lived in the cottage at the corner of the wood in which his work lay. When he, too, died, hard times came on Widow Winburn. The steward allowed her to keep on the cottage. The rent was a sore burden to her, but she would sooner have starved than leave it. Parish relief was out of the question for her father's child and her husband's widow; so she turned her hand to every odd job which offered, and went to work in the fields when nothing else could be had. Whenever there was sickness in the place, she was an untiring nurse; and, at one time, for some nine months, she took the office of postman, and walked daily some nine miles through a severe winter. The fatigue and exposure had broken down her health, and made her an old woman before her time. At last, in a lucky hour, the Doctor came to hear of her praiseworthy struggles, and gave her the Rectory washing, which had made her life a comparatively easy one again.

During all this time her poor neighbors had stood by her as the poor do stand by one another, helping her in numberless small ways, so that she had been able to realize the great object of her life, and keep Harry at school till he was nearly fourteen. By this time he had learned all that the village pedagogue could teach, and had in fact become an object of mingled pride and jealousy to that worthy man, who had his misgivings lest Harry's fame as a scholar should eclipse his own before many years were over.

Mrs. Winburn's character was so good, that no sooner was her son ready for a place than a place was ready for him; he stepped at once into the dignity of carter's boy, and his earnings, when added to his mother's, made them comfortable enough. Of course she was wrapped up in him, and believed that there was no such boy in the parish. And indeed she was nearer the truth than most mothers, for he soon grew into a famous specimen of a countryman;

tall and lithe, full of nervous strength, and not yet bowed down or stiffened by the constant toil of a laborer's daily life. In these matters, however, he had rivals in the village; but in intellectual accomplishments he was unrivalled. He was full of learning according to the village standard, could write and cipher well, was fond of reading such books as came in his way, and spoke his native English almost without an accent. He is one-and-twenty at the time when our story takes him up, a thoroughly skilled laborer, the best hedger and ditcher in the parish; and, when his blood is up, he can shear twenty sheep in a day, without razing the skin, or mow for sixteen hours at a stretch, with rests of half an hour for meals twice in the day.

Harry shaded his eyes with his hand for a minute, as he stood outside the cottage drinking in the fresh, pure air, laden with the scent of the honeysuckle which he had trained over the porch, and listening to the chorus of linnets and finches from the copse at the back of the house; he then set about the household duties, which he always made it a point of honor to attend to himself on Sundays. First he unshuttered the little lattice-window of the room on the ground floor; a simple enough operation, for the shutter was a mere wooden flap, which was closed over the window at night, and bolted with a wooden bolt on the outside, and thrown back against the wall in the daytime. Any one who would could have opened it at any moment of the night; but the poor sleep sound without bolts. Then he took the one old bucket of the establishment, and strode away to the well on the village green, and filled it with clear, cold water, doing the same kind office for the vessels of two or three rosy little damsels and boys, of ages varying from ten to fourteen, who were already astir, and to whom the winding-up of the parish chain and bucket would have been a work of difficulty. Returning to the cottage, he proceeded to fill his mother's kettle, sweep the hearth, strike a light, and make up the fire with a faggot from the little stack in the corner of the garden. Then he hauled the three-legged round table before the fire, and dusted it carefully over, and laid out the black Japan tea-tray with two delf cups and saucers of gorgeous pattern, and diminutive plates to match, and placed the sugar and slop basins, the big loaf and small piece of salt butter, in their accustomed places, and the little black teapot on the hob to get properly warm. There was little more to be done in-

doors, for the furniture was scanty enough; but everything in turn received its fair share of attention, and the little room, with its sunken tiled floor and yellow-washed walls, looked cheerful and homely. Then Harry turned his attention to the shed of his own contriving, which stood beside the faggot-stack, and from which expostulatory and plaintive grunts had been issuing ever since his first appearance at the door, telling of a faithful and useful friend who was sharp set on Sunday mornings, and desired his poor breakfast, and to be dismissed for the day to pick up the rest of his livelihood with his brethren porkers of the village on the green and in the lanes. Harry served out to the porker the poor mess which the wash of the cottage and the odds and ends of the little garden afforded; which that virtuous animal forthwith began to discuss with both fore-feet in the trough—by way, probably, of adding to the flavor—while his master scratched him gently between the ears and on the back with a short stick till the repast was concluded Then he opened the door of the stye, and the grateful animal rushed out into the lane, and away to the green with a joyful squeal and flirt of his hind-quarters in the air; and Harry, after picking a bunch of wall-flowers, and pansies, and hyacinths, a line of which flowers skirted the narrow garden walk, and putting them in a long-necked glass which he took from the mantel piece, proceeded to his morning ablutions, ample materials for which remained at the bottom of the family bucket, which he had put down on a little bench by the side of the porch. These finished, he retired indoors to shave and dress himself.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ENGLEBOURN VILLAGE.

Dame Winburn was not long after her son, and they sat down together to breakfast in their best Sunday clothes—she, in plain large white cap which covered all but a line of grey hair, a black stuff gown reaching to neck and wrists and small silk neckkerchief put on like a shawl; a thin, almost gaunt old woman, whom the years had not used tenderly, and who showed marks of their usage—but a reso

lute, high-couraged soul, who had met hard times in the face, and could meet them again if need were. She spoke in broad Berkshire, and was otherwise a homely body, but self-possessed and without a shade of real vulgarity in her composition.

The widow looked with some anxiety at Harry as he took his seat. Although something of a rustic dandy, of late he had not been so careful in the matter of dress as usual; but, in consequence of her reproaches, on this Sunday there was nothing to complain of. His black velveteen shooting coat, and cotton plush waistcoat, his brown corduroy knee-breeches and gaiters, sat on him well, and gave the world assurance of a well-to-do man, for few of the Englebourn laborers rose above smock-frocks and fustian trousers. He wore a blue bird's-eye handkerchief round his neck, and his shirt, though coarse in texture, was as white as the sun and the best laundress in Englebourn could manage to bleach it. There was nothing to find fault with in his dress therefore, but still his mother did not feel quite comfortable as she took stealthy glances at him. Harry was naturally a reserved fellow, and did not make much conversation himself, and his mother felt a little embarressed on this particular morning.

It was not, therefore, until Dame Winburn had finished her first slice of bread and butter, and had sipped the greater part of her second dish of tea out of her saucer, that she broke silence.

"I minded thy business last night, Harry, when I were up at the Rectory about the washin'. It's my belief as thou'lt get t'other 'lotment next quarter-day. The Doctor spoke very kind about it, and said as how he heer'd as high a character o' thee young as thee bist, as of are' a man in the parish, and as how he wur set on lettin' the lots to thaay as'd do best by 'em; only he said as the farmers went agin givin' more nor an acre to any man as worked for *them*; and the Doctor, you see, he don't like to go altogether agin the vestry folk."

"What business is it o' theirs," said Harry, "so long as they get their own work done? There's scarce one on 'em as hasn't more land already nor he can keep as should be, and for all that they want to snap up every bit as falls vacant, so as no poor man shall get it."

"'Tis mostly so with them as has," said his mother, with a half puzzled look; "Scriptur says as to them shall be given, and they shall have more abundant." Dame Win-

burn spoke hesitatingly, and looked doubtfully at Harry, as a person who has shot with a strange gun, and knows not what effect the bolt may have. Harry was brought up all standing by this unexpected quotation of his mother's; but, after thinking for a few moments while he cut himself a slice of bread, replied:—

"It don't say as those shall have more that can't use what they've got already. 'Tis a deal more like Naboth's vineyard for aught as I can see. But 'tis little odds to me which way it goes."

"How canst talk so, Harry?" said his mother reproachfully; "thou know'st thou wast set on it last fall, like a wasp on sugar. Why scarce a day past but thou wast up to the Rectory, to see the Doctor about it; and now thou'rt like to get th'lotment thou'lt not go anyst 'un."

Harry looked out at the open door, without answering. It was quite true that, in the last autumn, he had been very anxious to get as large an allotment as he could into his own hands, and that he had been for ever up towards the Rectory, but perhaps not always on the allotment business. He was naturally a self-reliant, shrewd fellow, and felt that if he could put his hand on three or four acres of land, he could soon make himself independent of the farmers. He knew that at harvest-times, and whenever there was a pinch for good laborers, they would be glad enough to have him; while at other times, with a few acres of his own, he would be his own master and could do much better for himself. So he had put his name down first on the Doctor's list, taken the largest lot he could get, and worked it so well that his crops, amongst others, had been a sort of village show last harvest-time. Many of the neighboring allotments stood out in sad contrast to those of Harry and the more energetic of the peasantry, and lay by the side of these latter only half worked and full of weeds, and the rent was never ready. It was worse than useless to let matters go on thus, and the question arose, what was to be done with the neglected lots. Harry, and all the men like him, applied at once for them; and their eagerness to get them had roused some natural jealousy amongst the farmers, who began to forsee that the new system might shortly leave them with none but the worst laborers. So the vestry had pressed on the Doctor, as Dame Winburn said, not to let any man have more than an acre, or an acre and a half; and the well-meaning, easy-going invalid old man couldn't make

up his mind what to do. So here was May again, and the neglected lots were still in the nominal occupation of the idlers. The Doctor got no rent, and was annoyed at the partial failure of a scheme which he had not indeed originated, but for which he had taken much credit to himself. The negligent occupiers grumbled that they were not allowed a drawback for manure, and that no pigstyes were put up for them. "'Twas allers understood so," they maintained, "and they'd never ha' took to the lots but for that." The good men grumbled that it would be too late now for them to do more than clean the lots of weeds this year. The farmers grumbled that it was always understood that no man should have more than one lot. The poor rector had led his flock into a miry place with a vengeance. People who cannot make up their minds breed trouble in other places besides country villages. However quiet and out of the way the place may be, there is always some *quasi* public topic, which stands, to the rural Englishman, in the place of treaty, or budget, or reform-bill. So the great allotment question, for the time, was that which exercised the minds of the inhabitants of Englebourn; and until lately no one had taken a keener interest in it than Harry Winburn. But that interest had now much abated, and so Harry looked through the cottage door, instead of answering his mother.

"'Tis my belief as you med amost hev it for the axin'." Dame Winburn began again when she found that he would not re-open the subject himself. "The young missus said as much to me herself last night. Ah! to be sure, things'd go better if she had the guidin' on 'em."

"I'm not going after it any more, mother. We can keep the bits o' sticks here together without it while you be alive; and if anything was to happen to you, I don't think I should stay in these parts. But it don't matter what becomes o' me; I can earn a livelihood anywhere."

Dame Winburn paused a moment before answering to subdue her vexation, and then said, "How can 'ee let hankerin' arter a lass take the heart out o' thee so? Hold up thy head, and act a bit measterful. The more thow makest o' thyself, the more like thou art to win."

"Did you hear aught of her last night, mother?" replied Harry, taking advantage of this ungracious opening to speak of the subject which was uppermost in his mind.

"I heer'd she wur goin' on well," said his mother,

"No likelihood of her comin' home?"

"Not as I could make out. Why, she hevn't been gone not four months. Now, do 'ee pluck up a bit, Harry; and be more like thyself."

"Why, mother, I've not missed a day's work since Christmas; so there ain't much to find fault with."

"Nay, Harry, 'tisn't thy work. Thou wert always good at thy work, praise God. Thou'rt thy father's own son for that. But thou dostn't keep about like, and take thy place wi' the lave on 'em since Christmas. Thou look'st hagged at times, and folk'll see't, and talk about thee afore long."

"Let 'em talk. I mind their talk no more than last year's wind," said Harry, abruptly.

"But thy old mother does," she said, looking at him with eyes full of pride and love; and so Harry, who was a right good son, began to inquire what it was that was specially weighing on his mother's mind, determined to do anything in reason to re-place her on the little harmless social pinnacle from which she was wont to look down on all the other mothers and sons of the parish. He soon found out that her present grievance arose from his having neglected his place as ringer of the heavy bell in the village peal on the two preceding Sundays; and, as this post was in some sort the corresponding one to stroke of the boat at Oxford, her anxiety was reasonable enough. So Harry promised to go to ringing in good time that morning, and then set about little odds and ends of jobs till it would be time to start. Dame Winburn went to her cooking and other household duties, which were pretty well got under when her son took his hat and started for the belfry. She stood at the door with a half-peeled potato in one hand, shading her eyes with the other, as she watched him striding along the raised footpath under the elms, when the sound of light footsteps and pleasant voices coming up from the other direction made her turn round and drop a curtsey as the rector's daughter and another young lady stopped at her door.

"Good morning, Betty," said the former; "here's a bright Sunday morning at last, isn't it?"

"'Tis indeed, miss; but where hev'ee been to?"

"Oh, we've only been for a little walk before school-time. This is my cousin, Betty. She hasn't been at Englebourn since she was quite a child; so I've been taking her to the Hawk's Lynch to see our view."

"And you can't think how I have enjoyed it," said her cousin; "it is so still and beautiful."

"I've heer'd say as there ain't no such a place for thretty mile round," said Betty, proudly, "But do'ee com in, tho', and sit'ee down a bit," she added, bustling inside her door, and beginning to rub down a chair with her apron; "'tis a smart step for gentlefolk to walk afore church." Betty's notions of the walking powers of gentlefolk were very limited.

"No, thank you, we must be getting on," said Miss Winter; "but how lovely your flowers are! Look, Mary, did you ever see such double pansies? We've nothing like them at the Rectory."

"Do'ee take some," said Betty, emerging again, and beginning to pluck a handful of her finest flowers; "'tis all our Harry's doing; he's mazing partickler about seeds."

"He seems to make everything thrive, Betty. There, that's plenty, thank you. We won't take many, for fear they should fade before church is over."

"Oh, dwont'ee be afeard, there's plenty more; and you be as welcom' as the day."

Betty never said a truer word; she was one of the real open-handed sort, who are found mostly amongst those who have the least to give. They or any one else were welcome to the best she had.

So the young ladies took the flowers, thanked her again, and passed on towards the Sunday-school.

The rector's daughter might have been a year or so older than her companion; she looked more. Her position in the village had been one of much anxiety, and she was fast getting an old head on young shoulders. The other young lady was a slip of a girl just coming out; in fact, this was the first visit which she had ever paid out of leading strings. She had lived in a happy home, where she had always been trusted and loved, and perhaps a thought too much petted.

There are some natures which attract petting; you can't help doing your best to spoil them in this way, and it is satisfactory, therefore, to know (as the fact is) that they are just the ones which cannot be so spoilt.

Miss Mary was one of these. Trustful, for she had never been tricked; fearless, for she had never been cowed; pure and bright as the Englebourn brook at fifty yards from its parent spring in the chalk, for she had a pure and bright

nature, and had come in contact as yet with nothing which could soil or cast a shadow. What wonder that her life gave forth light and music as it glided on, and that every one who knew her was eager to have her with them, to warm themselves in the light and rejoice in the music!

Besides all her other attractions, or in consequence of them for anything I know, she was one of the merriest young women in the world, always ready to bubble over and break out into clear laughter on the slightest provocation. And provocation had not been wanting during the last two days which she had spent with her cousin. As usual she had brought sunshine with her, and the old doctor had half forgotten his numerous complaints and grievances for the time. So the cloud which generally hung over the house had been partially lifted, and Mary, knowing and suspecting nothing of the dark side of life at Englebourn Rectory, rallied her cousin on her gravity, and laughed till she cried at the queer ways and talk of the people about the place.

As soon as they were out of hearing of Dame Winburn, Mary began—

"Well, Katie, I can't say that you have mended your case at all."

"Surely you can't deny that there is a great deal of character in Betty's face?" said Miss Winter.

"Oh, plenty of character: all your people, as soon as they begin to stiffen a little and get wrinkles, seem to be full of character, and I enjoy it much more than beauty; but we were talking about beauty, you know."

"Betty's son is the handsomest young man in the parish," said Miss Winter; "and I must say I don't think you could find a better-looking one anywhere."

"Then I can't have seen him."

"Indeed you have; I pointed him out to you at the post-office yesterday. Don't you remember? he was waiting for a letter."

"Oh, yes! now I remember. Well, he was better than most. But the faces of your young people in general are not interesting—I don't mean the children, but the young men and women—and they are awkward and clownish in their manners, without the quaintness of the elder generation, who are the funniest old dears in the world."

"They will all be quaint enough as they get older. You must remember the sort of life they lead. They get their

notions very slowly, and they must have notions in their heads before they can show them on their faces."

"Well, your Betty's son looked as if he had a notion of hanging himself yesterday."

"It's no laughing matter, Mary. I hear that he is desperately in love."

"Poor fellow! that makes a difference, of course. I hope he won't carry out his notion. Who is it, do you know? Do tell me all about it."

"Our gardener's daughter, I believe. Of course, I never meddle with these matters; but one can't help hearing the servant's gossip. I think it likely to be true, for he was about our premises at all sorts of times until lately, and I never see him now that she is away."

"Is she pretty?" said Mary, who was getting interested.

"Yes, she is our belle. In fact, they are the two beauties of the parish."

"Fancy that cross-grained old Simon having a pretty daughter. Oh, Katie, look here! who is this figure of fun?"

The figure of fun was a middle-aged man of small stature, and very bandy-legged, dressed in a blue coat and brass buttons, and carrying a great bass-viol bigger than himself, in a rough baize cover. He came out of a footpath into the road just before them, and, on seeing them, touched his hat to Miss Winter, and then fidgeted along with his load, and jerked his head in a deprecatory manner away from them as he walked on, with the sort of look and action which a favorite terrier uses when his master holds out a lighted cigar to his nose. He was the village tailor and constable, also the principal performer in the church-music which obtained in Englebourn. In the latter capacity he had of late come into collision with Miss Winter.

For this was another of the questions which divided the parish—The great church music question. From time immemorial, at least ever since the gallery at the west end had been built, the village psalmody had been in the hands of the occupiers of that Protestant structure. In the middle of the front row sat the musicians, three in number, who played respectively a bass-viol, a fiddle, and a clarionet. On one side of them were two or three young women, who sang treble—shrill, ear-piercing treble—with a strong nasal Berkshire drawl in it. On the other side of the musicians

sat the blacksmith, the wheelwright, and other tradesmen of the place. Tradesmen means in that part of the country what we mean by artisan, and these were naturally allied with the laborers, and consorted with them. So far as church-going was concerned, they formed a sort of independent opposition, sitting in the gallery, instead of in the nave, where the farmers and the two or three principal shopkeepers—the great landed and commercial interests—regularly sat and slept, and where the two publicans occupied pews, but seldom made even the pretence of worshipping.

The rest of the gallery was filled by the able-bodied male peasantry. The old worn-out men generally sat below in the free seats; the women also, and some few boys. But the hearts of these latter were in the gallery—a seat on the back benches of which was a sign that they had indued the *toga virilis*, and were thenceforth free from maternal and pastoral tutelage in the matter of church-going. The gallery thus constituted had gradually usurped the psalmody as their particular and special portion of the service: they left the clerk and the school children, aided by such of the aristocracy below as cared to join, to do the responses; but, when singing time came, they reigned supreme. The slate on which the Psalms were announced was hung out from before the centre of the gallery, and the clerk, leaving his place under the reading desk, marched up there to give them out. He took this method of preserving his constitutional connection with the singing, knowing that otherwise he could not have maintained the rightful position of his office in this matter. So matters had stood until shortly before the time of our story.

The present curate, however, backed by Miss Winter, had tried a reform. He was a quiet man, with a wife and several children, and small means. He had served in the diocese ever since he had been ordained, in a hum-drum sort of way, going where he was sent for, and performing his routine duties reasonably well, but without showing any great aptitude for his work. He had little interest, and had almost given up expecting promotion, which he certainly had done nothing particular to merit. But there was one point on which he was always ready to go out of his way, and take a little trouble. He was a good musician, and had formed choirs at all his former curacies.

Soon after his arrival, therefore, he, in concert with Miss Winter had begun to train the children in church-music. A small organ, which had stood in a passage in the Rectory for many years, had been repaired, and appeared first at the schoolroom, and at length under the gallery of the church; and it was announced one week to the party in possession, that, on the next Sunday, the constituted authorities would take the church-music into their own hands. Then arose a strife, the end of which had nearly been to send the gallery off, in a body, headed by the offended bass-viol, to the small red-brick little Bethel at the other end of the village. Fortunately the curate had too much good sense to drive matters to extremities, and so alienate the parish constable, and a large part of his flock, though he had not tact or energy enough to bring them round to his own views. So a compromise was come to; and the curate's choir were allowed to chant the Psalms and Canticles, which had always been read before, while the gallery remained triumphant masters of the regular Psalms.

My readers will now understand why Miss Winter's salutation to the musical constable was not so cordial as it was to the other villagers whom they had come across previously.

Indeed, Miss Winter, though she acknowledged the constable's salutation, did not seem inclined to encourage him to accompany them, and talk his mind out, although he was going the same way with them; and, instead of drawing him out, as was her wont in such cases, went on talking herself to her cousin.

The little man walked out in the road, evidently in trouble of mind. He did not like to drop behind or go ahead without some further remark from Miss Winter and yet could not screw up his courage to the point of opening the conversation himself. So he ambled on alongside the footpath on which they were walking, showing his discomfort by a twist of his neck every few seconds, and perpetual shiftings of his bass-viol, and hunching up of one shoulder.

The conversation of the young ladies under these circumstances was of course forced; and Miss Mary, though infinitely delighted at the meeting, soon began to pity their involuntary companion. She was full of the sensitive instinct which the best sort of women have to such a marvelous extent, and which tells them at once and infallibly if

any one in their company has even a creased rose-leaf next their moral skin.

Before they had walked a hundred yards she was interceding for the rebellious constable,

"Katie," she said softly in French, "do speak to him. The poor man is frightfully uncomfortable."

"It serves him right,' answered Miss Winter in the same language: "you don't know how impertinent he was the other day to Mr Walker. And he won't give way on the least point, and leads the rest of the old singers, and makes them as stubborn as himself."

"But look how he is winking and jerking his head at you. You really musn't be so cruel to him Katie. I shall have to begin talking to him if you don't."

Thus urged Miss Winter opened the conversation by asking after his wife, and when she had ascertained "that his missus wur pretty middlin," made some other commonplace remark and relapsed into silence. By the help of Mary, however, a sort of disjointed dialogue was kept up till they came to the gate which led up to the school, into which the children were trooping by twos and threes. Here the ladies turned in, and were going up the walk towards the school door, when the constable summoned up courage to speak on the matter which was troubling him, and, resting the bass-viol carefully on his right foot, calling out after them,

"Oh, please marm! Miss Winter!"

"Well," she said quietly, turning round, "what do you wish to say?"

"Why, please marm, I hopes as you don't think I be any ways unked 'bout this here quire-singin' as they calls it—I'm sartin you knows as there ain't amost nothing I wouldn't do to please ee."

"Well, you know how to do it very easily," she said when he paused. "I don't ask you even to give up your music and try to work with us, though I think you might have done that. I only ask you to use some psalms and tunes which are fit to be used in a church.'

"To be sure us ool. 'Taint we as wants no new-fangled tunes, them as we sings be aal owld ones as ha' been used in our church ever since I can mind. But you only choose thaay as you likes out o' the book, and we be ready to kep to thaay."

"I think Mr. Walker made a selection for you some weeks ago," said Miss Winter; "did he not?"

"'Ees, but 'tis narra mossel o' use for we to try his 'goriums and sick like. I hopes you wunt be offended wi' me, miss, for I be telling nought but truth." He spoke louder as they got nearer to the school door, and, as they were opening it, shouted his last shot after them, "'Tis na good to try thaay tunes o' his'n, miss. When us praises God, us likes to praise un joyful."

"There, you hear that, Mary," said Miss Winter. "You'll soon begin to see why I look grave. There never was such a hard parish to manage. Nobody will do what they ought. I never can get them to do anything. Perhaps we may manage to teach the children better, that's my only comfort."

"But, Katie dear, what *do* the poor things sing? Psalms, I hope."

"Oh yes, but they choose all the odd ones on purpose, I believe. Which class will you take?"

And so the young ladies settled to their teaching, and the children in her class all fell in love with Mary before church-time.

The bass-viol proceeded to the church and did the usual rehearsals, and gossipped with the sexton, to whom he confided the fact that the young missus was "terrible vexed." The bells soon began to ring, and Widow Winburn's heart was glad as she listened to the full peal, and thought to herself that it was her Harry who was making so much noise in the world, and speaking to all the neighborhood. Then the peal ceased as church-time drew near, and the single bell began, and the congregation came flocking in from all sides. The farmers, letting their wives and children enter, gathered round the chief porch and compared notes in a ponderous manner on crops and markets. The labourers collected near the door by which the gallery was reached. All the men of the parish seemed to like standing about before church, until they had seen the clergyman safely inside. He came up with the school children and the young ladies, and in due course the bell stopped and the service began. There was a very good congregation still at Englebourn; the adult generation had been bred up in times when every decent person in the parish went to church, and the custom was still strong, notwithstanding the rector's bad example. He scarcely ever came to church himself in the

mornings, though his wheelchair might be seen going up and down on the gravel before his house or on the lawn on warm days, and this was one of his daughter's greatest troubles.

The little choir of children sang admirably, led by the schoolmistress, and Miss Winter and the curate exchanged approving glances. They performed the liveliest chant in their collection, that the opposition might have no cause to complain of their want of joyfulness. And in turn Miss Winter was in hopes that, out of deference to her, the usual rule of selection in the gallery might have been modified. It was with no small annoyance, therefore, that, after the Litany was over, and the tuning finished, she heard the clerk give out that they would praise God by singing part of the ninety-first Psalm. Mary, who was on the tiptoe of expectation as to what was coming, saw the curate give a slight shrug with his shoulders and lift of his eyebrows as he left the reading-desk, and in another minute it became a painful effort for her to keep from laughing as she slyly watched her cousin's face; while the gallery sang with vigour worthy of any cause or occasion—

"On the old lion He shall go,
The adder fell and long;
On the young lion tread also,
With dragons stout and strong."

The trebles took up the last line, and repeated—

"With dragons stout and strong;'

and then the whole strength of the gallery chorused again—

"With dra-*gons* stout and strong;"

and the bass-viol seemed to her to prolong the notes and to gloat over them as he droned them out, looking triumphantly at the distant curate. Mary was thankful to kneel down to compose her face. The first trial was the severe one, and she got through the second psalm much better; and by the time Mr. Walker had plunged fairly into his sermon she was a model of propriety and sedateness again. But it was to be a Sunday of adventures. The sermon had scarcely begun when there was a stir down by the door at the west end, and people began to look round and whisper. Presently a man came softly up and said something to the clerk; the clerk jumped up and whispered to the curate, who paused for a moment with a puzzled look, and, instead of

finishing his sentence, said in a loud voice, "Farmer Groves' house is on fire!"

The curate probably anticipated the effect of his words; in a minute he was the only person left in the church except the clerk and one or two very infirm old folk. He shut up and pocketed his sermon, and followed his flock.

It proved luckily to be only Farmer Groves' chimney and not his house which was on fire. The farmhouse was only two fields from the village, and the congregation rushed across there, Harry Winburn and two or three of the most active young men and boys leading. As they entered the yard the flames were rushing out of the chimney, and any moment the thatch might take fire. Here was the real danger. A ladder had just been raised against the chimney, and, while a frightened farm-girl and a carter-boy held it at the bottom, a man was going up it carrying a bucket of water. It shook with his weight, and the top was slipping gradually along the face of the chimney, and in another moment would rest against nothing. Harry and his companions saw the danger at a glance, and shouted to the man to stand still till they could get to the ladder. They rushed towards him with the rush which men can only make under strong excitement. The foremost of them caught a spoke with one hand, but before he could steady it, the top slipped clear of the chimney, and, ladder, man, and bucket came heavily to the ground.

Then came a scene of bewildering confusion, as women and children trooped into the yard—"Who was it?" "Was he dead?" "The fire was catching the thatch." "The stables were on fire." "Who did it?"—all sorts of cries and all sorts of acts except the right ones. Fortunately, two or three of the men, with heads on their shoulders, soon organized a line for handling buckets; the flue was stopped below, and Hary Winburn standing nearly at the top of the ladder, which was now safely planted, was deluging the thatch round the chimney from the buckets handed up to him. In a few minutes he was able to pour water down the chimney itself, and soon afterwards the whole affair was at an end. The farmer's dinner was spoilt, but otherwise no damage had been done, except to the clothes of the foremost men; and the only accident was that first fall from the ladder.

The man had been carried out of the yard while the fire was still burning; so that it was hardly known who it was.

Now, in answer to their inquiries, it proved to be old Simon, the rector's gardner and head man, who had seen the fire, and sent the news to the church, while he himself went to the spot, with such result as we have seen.

The surgeon had not yet seen him. Some declared he was dead; others, that he was sitting up at home, and quite well. Little by little the crowd dispersed to Sunday's dinners; when they met again before the afternoon's serdice, it was ascertained that Simon was certainly not dead, but all else was still nothing more than rumor. Public opinion was much divided, some holding that it would go hard with a man of his age and heft; but the common belief seemed to be that he was of that sort "as'd take a deal o' killin'," and that he would be none the worse for such a fall as that.

The wo young ladies had been much shocked at the accident, and had accompanied the hurdle on which old Simon was carried to his cottage door; after afternoon service they went round by the cottage to inquire. The two girls knocked at the door, which was opened by his wife, who dropped a curtsey and smoothed down her Sunday apron when she found who were her visitors.

She seemed at first a little unwilling to let them in; but Miss Winter pressed so kindly to see her husband, and Mary made such sympathizing eyes at her, that the old woman gave in and conducted them through the front room into that beyond, where the patient lay.

"I hope as you'll excuse it, miss, for I knows the place do smell terrible bad of baccer; only my old man he said as how—"

"Oh, never mind, we don't care at all about the smell. Poor Simon! I'm sure if it does him any good, or soothes the pain, I shall be glad to buy him some tobacco myself."

The old man was lying on the bed with his coat and boots off, and a worsted nightcap of his wife's knitting pulled on to his head. She had tried hard to get him to go to bed at once, and take some physic, and his present costume and position was the compromise. His back was turned to them as they entered, and he was evidently in pain, for he drew his breath heavily and with difficulty, and gave a sort of groan at every respiration. He did not seem to notice their entrance; so his wife touched him on the

shoulder, and said, "Simon, here's the young ladies come to see how you be."

Simon turned himself round, and winced and groaned as he pulled off his nightcap in token of respect.

"We didn't like to go home without coming to see how you were, Simon. Has the doctor been?"

"Oh, yes, thank'ee, miss. He've a been and feel'd un all over, and listened at the chest on un," said his wife.

"And what did he say?"

"He zem'd to zay as there wur no bwones bruk—ugh, ugh," put in Simon, who spoke his native tongue with a buzz, imported from farther west, "but a couldn't zay wether or no there warn't som infarnal injury—"

"Etarnal, Simon, etarnal!" interrupted his wife; "how canst use such words afore the young ladies?"

"I tell'ee wife, as 'twur infarnal—ugh, ugh," retorted the gardner.

"Internal injury?" suggested Miss Winter. "I'm very sorry to hear it."

"Zummut inside o' me like, as wur got out o' place," explained Simon; "and I thenks a must be near about the mark, for I feels mortal bad here when I tries to move;" and he put his hand on his side. "Hows'm'ever, as there's no bwones bruk, I hopes to be about to-morrow mornin', please the Lord—ugh, ugh."

"You mustn't think of it, Simon," said Miss Winter. "You must be quite quiet for a week, at least, till you get rid of this pain."

"So I tells un, Miss Winter," put in the wife. "You hear what the young missus says, Simon?"

"And wut's to happen to Tiny?" said the contumacious Simon, scornfully. "Her'll cast her calf, and me not by. Her's calving maybe this minut. Tiny's time were up, miss, two days back, and her's never no gurt while arter ner time."

"She will do very well, I dare say," said Miss Winter. "One of the men can look after her."

The notion of any one else attending Tiny in her interesting situation seemed to excite Simon beyond bearing, for he raised himself on one elbow, and was about to make a demonstration with his other hand, when the pain seized him again, and he sank back groaning.

"There, you see, Simon, you can't move without pain. You must be quiet till you have seen the doctor again."

"There's the red spider out along the south wall—ugh, ugh," persisted Simon, without seeming to hear her; "and your new g'raniums a'most covered wi' blight. I wur a tacklin' one of 'em just afore you cum in."

Following the direction indicated by his nod, the girls became aware of a plant by his bedside, which he had been fumigating, for his pipe was leaning against the flower-pot in which it stood.

"He wouldn't lie still nohow, miss," explained his wife, "till I went and fetched un in a pipe and one o' thaay plants from the greenhouse."

"It was very thoughtful of you, Simon," said Miss Winter; "you know how much I prize these new plants: but we will manage them: and you mustn't think of these things now. You have had a wonderful escape to-day for a man of your age. I hope we shall find that there is nothing much the matter with you after a few days, but you might have been killed you know. You ought to be very thankful to God that you were not killed in that fall."

"So I be, miss, werry thankful to un—ugh, ugh;—and if it please the Lord to spare my life till to-morrow mornin',—ugh, ugh,—we'll smoke them cussed insects."

This last retort of the incorrigible Simon on her cousin's attempt, as the rector's daughter, to improve the occasion, was too much for Miss Mary, and she slipped out of the room lest she should bring disgrace on herself by an explosion of laughter. She was joined by her cousin in another minute, and the two walked together toward the Rectory.

"I hope you were not faint, dear, with that close room, smelling of smoke?"

"Oh dear, no; to tell you the truth, I was only afraid of laughing at your quaint old patient. What a rugged old dear he is. I hope he isn't much hurt."

"I hope not, indeed; for he is the most honest, faithful old servant in the world, but so obstinate. He never will go to church on Sunday mornings; and, when I speak to him about it, he says papa doesn't go. Which is very wrong and impertinent of him."

CHAPTER XIX.

A PROMISE OF FAIRER WEATHER.

All dwellers in and about London are, alas! too well acquainted with the never-to-be-enough-hated change which we have to undergo once, at least, in every spring. As each succeeding winter wears away, the same thing happens to us.

For some time we do not trust the fair lengthening days, and cannot believe that the dirty pair of sparrows who live opposite our window are really making love and going to build, notwithstanding all their twittering. But morning after morning rises fresh and gentle; there is no longer any voice in the air; we drop our over-coats; we rejoice in the green shoots which the privet hedge is making in the square garden, and hail the returning tender-pointed leaves of the plane-trees as friends; we go out of our way to walk through Covent Garden Market to see the ever-brightening show of flowers from the happy country.

This state of things goes on sometimes for a few days only, sometimes for weeks, till we make sure that we are safe for this spring at any rate. Don't we wish we may get it! Sooner or later, but sure—sure as Christmas bills, or the income-tax, or anything, if there be anything, surer than these—comes the morning when we are suddenly conscious as soon as we rise that there is something the matter. We do not feel comfortable in our clothes; nothing tastes quite as it should at breakfast; though the day looks bright enough, there is a fierce dusty taste about it as we look out through windows, which no instinct now prompts us to throw open, as it has done every day for the last month.

But it is only when we open our doors and issue into the street, that the hateful reality comes right home to us. All moisture, and softness, and pleasantness has gone clean out of the air since last night; we seem to inhale yards of horse hair instead of satin; our skins dry up; our eyes, and hair, and whiskers, and clothes are soon filled with loathsome dust, and our nostrils with the reek of the great city. We glance at the weather-cock on the nearest steeple, and see that it points N.E. And so long as the change lasts, we carry about with us a feeling of anger and impatience as though we personally were being ill-treated. We could

have borne with it well enough in November, it would have been natural, and all in the days work in March; but now, when Rotton-row is beginning to be crowded, when long lines of pleasure vans are leaving town on Monday mornings for Hampton Court or the poor remains of dear Epping Forest, when the exhibitions are open, or about to open, when the religious public is up, or on its way up, for May meetings, when the Thames is already sending up faint warnings of what we may expect as soon as his dirty old life's blood shall have been thoroughly warmed up, and the Ship and Trafalgar, and the Star and Garter are in full swing at the antagonistic poles of the cockney system we do feel that this blight which has come over us and everything is an insult, and that while it lasts, as there is nobody who can be made particularly responsible for it, we are justified in going about in general disgust, and ready to quarrel with anybody we may meet on the smallest pretext.

This sort of east-windy state is perhaps the best physical analogy for that mental one in which our hero now found himself. The real crises was over; he had managed to pass through the eye of the storm, and drift for the present at least into the skirts of it, where he lay rolling under bare poles, comparatively safe, but without any power as yet to get the ship well in hand, and make her obey her helm. The storm might break over him again at any minute, and would find him almost as helpless as ever.

For he could not follow Drysdale's advice at once, and break off his visits to "The Choughs" altogether. He went back again after a day or two, but only for short visits; he never stayed behind now after the other men left the bar, and avoided interviews with Patty alone as diligently as he had sought them before. She was puzzled at his change of manner, and not being able to account for it, was piqued, and ready to revenge herself and pay him out in the hundred little ways which the least practised of her sex know how to employ for the discipline of any of the inferior or trousered half of the creation. If she had been really in love with him, it would have been a different matter; but she was not. In the last six weeks she had certainly often had visions of the pleasures of being a lady and keeping servants, and riding in a carriage like the squires' and rectors' wives and daughters about her home. She had a liking, even a sentiment for him, which might very well have grown into something dangerous before long; but as yet it

was not more than skin deep. Of late, indeed, she had been much more frightened than attracted by the conduct of her admirer, and really felt it a relief, notwithstanding her pique, when he retired into the elder brother sort of state. But she would have been more than woman if she had not resented the change; and so very soon the pangs of jealousy were added to his other troubles. Other men were beginning to frequent "The Choughs" regularly. Drysdale, besides dividing with Tom the prestige of being an original discoverer, was by far the largest customer. St. Cloud came, and brought Chanter with him, to whom Patty was actually civil, not because she liked him at all, but because she saw that it made Tom furious. Though he could not fix on any one man in particular, he felt that mankind in general were gaining on him. In his better moments, indeed, he often wished that she would take the matter into her own hands and throw him over for good and all; but keep away from the place altogether he could not, and often when he fancied himself on the point of doing it, a pretty toss of her head, or a kind look of her eyes would scatter all his good resolutions to the four winds.

And so the days dragged on, and he dragged on through them; hot fits of conceit alternating in him with cold fits of despondency and mawkishness and discontent with everything and everybody, which were all the more intolerable from their entire strangeness. Instead of seeing the bright side of all things, he seemed to be looking at creation through yellow spectacles, and saw faults and blemishes in all his acquaintance which had been till now invisible.

But the more he was inclined to depreciate all other men, the more he felt there was one to whom he had been grossly unjust. And, as he recalled all that had passed, he began to do justice to the man who had not flinched from warning him and braving him, who he felt had been watching over him, and trying to guide him straight, when he had lost all power or will to keep straight himself.

From this time the dread increased on him least any of the other men should find out his quarrel with Hardy. Their utter ignorance of it encouraged him in the hope that it might all pass off like a bad dream. While it remained a matter between them alone, he felt that all might come straight, though he could not think how. He began to loiter by she entrance of the passage which led to Hardy's rooms; sometimes he would find something to say to his

scout or bed-maker which took him into the back regions outside Hardy's window, glancing at it sideways as he stood giving his orders. There it was, wide open, generally—he hardly knew whether he hoped to catch a glimpse of the owner, but he did hope that Hardy might hear his voice. He watched him in chapel and hall furtively, but constantly, and was always fancying what he was doing and thinking about. Was it as painful an effort to Hardy, he wondered, as to him to go on speaking, as if nothing had happened, when they met at the boats, as they did now again almost daily (for Diogenes was bent on training some of the torpids for next year), and yet never to look one another in the face; to live together as usual during part of every day, and yet to feel all the time that a great wall had risen between them, more hopelessly dividing them for the time than thousands of miles of ocean or continent?

Amongst other distractions which Tom tried at this crisis of his life, was reading. For three or four days running, he really worked hard—very hard, if we were to reckon by the number of hours he spent in his own rooms over his books with his oak sported—hard, even though we should only reckon by results. For, though scarcely an hour passed that he was not balancing on the hind legs of his chair with a vacant look in his eyes, and thinking of anything but Greek roots or Latin constructions, yet on the whole he managed to get through a good deal, and one evening, for the first time since his quarrel with Hardy, felt a sensation of real comfort—it hardly amounted to pleasure—as he closed his Sophocles some hour or so after hall, having just finished the last of the Greek plays which he meant to take in for his first examination. He leaned back in his chair and sat for a few minutes, letting his thoughts follow their own bent. They soon took to going wrong, and he jumped up in fear lest he should be drifting back into the black stormy sea, in the trough of which he had been laboring so lately, and which he felt he was by no means clear of yet. At first he caught up his cap and gown as though he were going out. There was a wine party at one of his acquaintance's rooms; or he could go and smoke a cigar in the pool room, or at any one of a dozen other places. On second thoughts, however, he threw his academicals back on to the sofa and went to his book-case. The reading had paid so well that evening that he resolved to go on with it. He had no particular object in selecting one

book more than another, and so took down carelessly the first that came to hand.

It happened to be a volume of Plato, and opened of its own accord at the "Apology." He glanced at a few lines. What a flood of memories they called up! This was almost the last book he had read at school; and teacher, and friends, and lofty oak-shelved library stood out before him at once. Then the blunders that he himself and others had made rushed through his mind, and he almost burst into a laugh as he wheeled his chair round to the window, and began reading where he had opened, encouraging every thought of the old times when he first read that marvellous defense, and throwing himself back into them with all his might. And still, as he read, forgotten words of wise comment, and strange thoughts of wonder and longing, came back to him. The great truth which he had been been led to the brink of in those early days rose in all its awe and all its attractiveness before him. He leaned back in his chair, and gave himself up to his thought; and how strangely that thought bore on the struggle which had been raging in him of late; how an answer seemed to be trembling to come out of it to all the cries, now defiant, now plaintive, which had gone up out of his heart in this time of trouble! For his thought was of that spirit, distinct from himself, and yet communing with his inmost soul, always dwelling in him, knowing him better than he knew himself, never misleading him, always leading him to light and truth, of which the old philosopher spoke. "The old heathen, Socrates, did actually believe that—there can be no question about it;" he thought, "Has not the testimony of the best men through these two thousand years borne witness that he was right—that he did not believe a lie? That was what we were told. Surely I don't mistake! Were we not told too, or did I dream it, that what was true for him was true for every man—for me? That there is a spirit dwelling in me, striving with me, ready to lead me into all truth if I will submit to his guidance?"

"Ay! submit, submit, there's the rub! Give yourself up to his guidance! Throw up the reins, and say you've made a mess of it. Well, why not? Haven't I made a mess of it? Am I fit to hold the reins?"

"Not I"—he got up and began walking about his room—"I give it up."

"Give it up!" he went on presently; "yes, but to whom? Not to the dæmon spirit, whatever it was, who took up his abode in the old Athenian—at least, so he said, and so I believe. No, no! Two thousand years and all that they have seen have not passed over the world to leave us just where he was left. We want no dæmons or spirits. And yet the old heathen was guided right, and what can a man want more? and who ever wanted guidance more than I now—here—in this room—at this minute? I give up the reins; who will take them?" And so there came on him one of those seasons when a man's thoughts cannot be followed in words. A sense of awe came on him, and over him, and wrapped him round; awe at a presence of which he was becoming suddenly conscious, into which he seemed to have wandered, and yet which he felt must have been there, around him, in his own heart and soul, though he knew it not. There was hope and longing in his heart, mingling with the fear of that presence, but withal the old reckless and daring feeling which he knew so well, still bubbling up untamed, untamable it seemed to him.

The room stifled him now; so he threw on his cap and gown, and hurried down into the quadrangle. It was very quiet; probably there was not a dozen men in college. He walked across to the low, dark entrance of the passage which led to Hardy's rooms, and there paused. Was he there by chance, or was he guided there? Yes, this was the right way for him, he had no doubt now as to that; down the dark passage and into the room he knew so well—and what then? He took a short turn or two before the entrance. How could he be sure that Hardy was alone? And, if not, to go in would be worse than useless. If he were alone, what should he say? After all, *must* he go in there? was there no way but that?

The college clock struck a quarter to seven. It was his usual time for "The Choughs;" the house would be quiet now: was there not one looking out for him there who would be grieved if he did not come? After all, might not that be his way, for this night at least? He might bring pleasure to one human being by going there at once. That he knew; what else could he be sure of?

At this moment he heard Hardy's door open, and a voice saying "Good-night," and the next Grey came out of the passage, and was passing close to him.

"Join yourself to him." The impulse came so strongly into Tom's mind this time, that it was like a voice speaking to him. He yielded to it, and, stepping to Grey's side, wished him good-evening. The other returned his salute in his shy way, and was hurrying on, but Tom kept by him.

"Have you been reading with Hardy?"

"Yes."

"How is he? I have not seen anything of him for some time."

"Oh, very well, I think," said Grey, glancing sideways at his questioner, and adding, after a moment, "I have wondered rather not to see you there of late."

"Are you going to your school?" said Tom, breaking away from the subject.

"Yes, and I am rather late; I must make haste on; good night."

"Will you let me go with you to-night? It would be a real kindness. Indeed," he added, as he saw how embarrassing his proposal was to Grey, "I will do whatever you tell me—you don't know how grateful I should be to you. Do let me go—just for to-night. Try me once."

Grey hesitated, turned his head sharply once or twice as they walked on together, and then said with something like a sigh—

"I don't know, I'm sure. Did you ever teach in a night school?"

"No, but I have taught in the Sunday-school at home sometimes. Indeed, I will do whatever you tell me."

"Oh! but this is not at all like a Sunday-school. They are a very rough, wild lot."

"The rougher the better," said Tom; "I shall know how to manage them then."

"But you must not really be rough with them."

"No, I won't; I didn't mean that," said Tom, hastily, for he saw his mistake at once. "I shall take it as a great favor, if you will let me go with you to-night. You won't repent it, I'm sure."

Grey did not seem at all sure of this, but saw no means of getting rid of his companion, and so they walked on together and turned down a long, narrow court in the lowest part of the town. At the doors of the houses laboring men, mostly Irish, lounged or stood about, smoking and talking to one another, or to the women who leant out of

the windows, or passed to and fro on their various errands of business or pleasure. A group of half-grown lads were playing at pitch-farthing at the farther end, and all over the court were scattered children of all ages, ragged and noisy little creatures most of them, on whom paternal and maternal admonitions and cuffs were constantly being expended, and to all appearances in vain.

At the sight of Grey a shout arose amongst the smaller boys, of "Here's the teacher!" and they crowded around him and Tom as they went up the court. Several of the men gave him a half-surly half-respectful nod, as he passed along, wishing them good evening. The rest merely stared at him and his companion. They stopped at a door which Grey opened, and led the way into the passage of an old tumble-down cottage, on the ground floor of which were two low rooms which served for the school-rooms.

A hard-featured, middle-aged woman, who kept the house, was waiting, and said to Grey, "Mr. Jones told me to say, sir, he would not be here to night, as he has got a bad fever case—so you was to take only the lower classes, sir, he said; and the policeman would be near to keep out the big boys if you wanted him. Shall I go and tell him to step round, sir?"

Grey looked embarrassed for a moment, and then said, "No, never mind: you can go;" and then turning to Tom, added, "Jones is the curate; he won't be here to-night; and some of the bigger boys are very noisy and troublesome, and only come to make a noise. However, if they come we must do our best."

Meantime, the crowd of small ragged urchins had filled the room, and were swarming on to the benches and squabbling for the copy-books which were laid out on the thin desks. Grey set to work to get them into order, and soon the smallest were draughted off into the inner room with slates and spelling-books, and the bigger ones, some dozen in number, settled to their writing. Tom seconded him so readily, and seemed so much at home, that Grey felt quite relieved.

"You seem to get on capitally," he said; "I will go into the inner room to the little ones, and you stay and take these. There are the class-books when they have done their copies," and so went off into the inner room and closed the door.

Tom set himself to work with a will, and as he bent over one after another of the pupils, and guided the small grubby hand which clutched the inky pens with cramped fingers, and went spluttering and blotching along the lines of the copy-books, felt the yellow scales dropping from his eyes, and more warmth coming back into his heart than he had known there for many a day.

All went on well inside, notwithstanding a few small outbreaks between the scholars, but every now and then mud was thrown against the window, and noises outside and in the passages threatened some interruption. At last, when the writing was finished, the copy-books cleared away, and the class-books distributed, the door opened, and two or three big boys of fifteen or sixteen lounged in, with their hands in their pockets and their caps on. There was an insolent look about them which set Tom's back up at once; however, he kept his temper, made them take their caps off, and, as they said they wanted to read with the rest, let them take their places on the benches.

But now came the tug of war. He could not keep his eyes on the whole lot at once, and, no sooner did he fix his attention on the stammering reader for the time being and try to help him, than anarchy broke out all round him. Small stones and shot were thrown about, and cries arose from the smaller fry, "Please, sir, he's been and poured some ink down my back," "He's stole my book, sir," "He's gone and stuck a pin in my leg." The evil-doers were so cunning that it was impossible to catch them; but as he was hastily turning in his own mind what to do, a cry arose, and one of the benches went suddenly over backwards on to the floor, carrying with it its whole freight of boys, except two of the bigger ones, who were the evident authors of the mishap.

Tom sprang at the one nearest him, seized him by the collar, hauled him into the passage, and sent him out of the street-door with a sound kick; and then rushing back, caught hold of the second, who went down on his back and clung round Tom's legs, shouting for help to his remaining companions, and struggling and swearing. It was all the work of a moment, and now the door opened, and Grey appeared from the inner room. Tom left off hauling his prize towards the passage, and felt and looked very foolish.

"This fellow, and another whom I have turned out, up-

set that form with all the little boys on it," he said, apologetically.

"It's a lie, 'twasn't me," roared the captive, to whom Tom administered a sound box on the ear, while the small boys, rubbing different parts of their bodies, chorused, "'twas him, teacher, 'twas him," and heaped further charges of pinching, pin-sticking, and other atrocities on him.

Grey astonished Tom by his firmness. "Don't strike him again," he said. "Now, go out at once, or I will send for your father." The fellow got up, and, after standing a moment and considering his chance of successful resistance to physical force in the person of Tom, and moral in that of Grey, slunk out. "You must go too, Murphy," went on Grey to another of the intruders.

"Oh, your honor let me bide. I'll be as quiet as a mouse," pleaded the Irish boy; and Tom would have given in, but Grey was unyielding.

"You were turned out last week, and Mr. Jones said you were not to come back for a fortnight."

"Well, good night to your honor," said Murphy, and took himself off.

"The rest may stop," said Grey. "You had better take the inner room now; I will stay here."

"I'm very sorry," said Tom.

"You couldn't help it; no one can manage those two. Murphy is quite different, but I should have spoiled him if I had let him stay now."

The remaining half hour passed off quietly. Tom retired into the inner room, and took up Grey's lesson, which he had been reading to the boys from a large Bible with pictures. Out of consideration for their natural and acquired restlessness, the little fellows, who were all between eight and eleven years old, were only kept sitting at their pothooks and spelling for the first half hour or so, and then were allowed to crowd round the teacher, who read and talked to them, and showed them the pictures. Tom found the Bible open at the story of the prodigal son, and read it out to them as they clustered round his knees. Some of the outside ones fidgeted about a little, but those close round him listened with ears, and eyes, and bated breath; and two little blue-eyed boys, without shoes—their ragged clothes concealed by long pinafores which their widowed mother had put on clean to send them to school—leaned against him and looked up in his face, and his heart warmed

to the touch and the look. "Please, teacher, read it again," they said when he finished; so he read it again and sighed when Grey came in and lighted a candle (for the room was getting dark) and said it was time for prayers.

A few collects, and the Lord's Prayer, in which all the young voices joined, drowning for a minute the noises from the court outside, finished the evening's schooling. The children trooped out, and Grey went to speak to the woman who kept the house. Tom, left to himself, felt strangely happy, and, for something to do, took the snuffers and commenced a crusade against a large family of bugs, who, taking advantage of the quiet, came cruising out of a crack in the otherwise neatly papered wall. Some dozen had fallen on his spear when Grey re-appeared, and was much horrified at the sight. He called the woman and told her to have the hole carefully fumigated and mended.

"I thought we had killed them all long ago," he said; "but the place is tumbling down."

"It looks well enough," said Tom.

"Yes, we have it kept as tidy as possible. It ought to be at least a little better than what the children see at home." And so they left the school and court and walked up to college.

"Where are you going?" Tom said, as they entered the gate.

"To Hardy's rooms; will you come?"

"No, not to-night," said Tom; "I know that you want to be reading; I should only interrupt."

"Well, good night, then," said Grey, and went on, leaving Tom standing in the porch. On the way up from the school he had almost made up his mind to go to Hardy's rooms that night. He longed and yet feared to do so; and, on the whole, was not sorry for an excuse. Their first meeting must be alone, and it would be a very embarrasing one, for him at any rate. Grey, he hoped, would tell Hardy of his visit to the school, and that would show that he was coming round, and make the meeting easier. His talk with Grey, too, had removed one great cause of uneasiness from his mind. It was now quite clear that he had no suspicion of the quarrel, and, if Hardy had not told him, no one else could know of it.

Altogether, he strolled into the quadrangle a happier and lounder man than he had been since his first visit to "The Choughs," and looked up and answered with his old look

and voice when he heard his name called from one of the first-floor windows.

The hailer was Drysdale, who was leaning out in lounging coat and velvet cap, and enjoying a cigar as usual, in the midst of the flowers of his hanging garden.

"You've heard the good news, I suppose?"

"No, what do you mean?"

"Why, Blake has got the Latin verse."

"Hurrah! I'm so glad."

"Come up and have a weed." Tom ran up the staircase and into Drysdale's rooms, and was leaning out of the window at his side in another minute.

"What does he get by it?" he said, "do you know?"

"No; some books bound in Russia, I dare say, with the Oxford arms, and 'Dominus illuminatio mea,' on the back."

"No money?"

"Not much—perhaps a ten'ner," answered Drysdale, but no end of κῦδος, I suppose."

"It makes it look well for his first, don't you think? But I wish he had got some money for it. I often feel very uncomfortable about that bill, don't you?"

"Not I, what's the good? It's nothing when you are used to it. Besides, it don't fall due for another six weeks."

"But if Blake can't meet it then?" said Tom.

"Well, it will be vacation, and I'll trouble greasy Benjamin to catch me then."

"But you don't mean to say you won't pay it?" said Tom in horror.

"Pay it! You may trust Benjamin for that. He'll pull round his little usuries somehow."

"Only we have promised to pay on a certain day, you know."

"Oh, of course, that's the form. That only means that he can't pinch us sooner."

"I do hope, though, Drysdale, that it will be paid on the day," said Tom, who could not quite swallow the notion of forfeiting his word, even though it were only a promise to pay to a scoundrel.

"All right. You've nothing to do with it, remember. He won't bother you. Besides, you can plead infancy, if the worst comes to the worst. There's such a queer old bird gone to your friend Hardy's rooms."

"The mention of Hardy broke the disagreeable train of thought into which Tom was falling, and he listened eagerly as Drysdale went on.

"It was about half an hour ago. I was looking out here, and saw an old fellow come hobbling into quad on two sticks, in a shady blue uniform coat and white trousers. The kind of old boy you read about in books, you know. Commodore Trunnion, or Uncle Toby, or one of that sort. Well, I watched him backing and filing about the quad, and trying one staircase and another; but there was nobody about. So down I trotted and went up to him for fun, and to see what he was after. It was as good as a play, if you could have seen it. I was ass enough to take off my cap and make a low bow as I came up to him, and he pulled off his uniform cap in return, and we stood there bowing to one another. He was a thorough old gentleman, and I felt rather foolish for fear that he should see that I expected a lark when I came out. But I don't think he had an idea of it, and only set my capping him down to the wonderful good manners of the college. So we got quite thick, and I piloted him across to Hardy's staircase in the back quad. I wanted him to come up and quench, but he declined, with many apologies. I'm sure he is a character."

"He must be Hardy's father," said Tom.

"I shouldn't wonder. But is his father in the navy?"

"He is a retired captain."

"Then no doubt you're right. What shall we do? Have a hand at picquet. Some men will be here directly. Only for love."

Tom declined the proffered game, and went off soon after to his own rooms, a happier man than he had been since his first night at "The Choughs."

CHAPTER XX.

THE RECONCILIATION.

Tom rose in the morning with a presentiment that all would be over now before long, and to make his presentiment come true, resolved, before night, to go himself to Hardy and give in. All he reserved to himself was the liberty to

do it in the manner which would be least painful to himself. He was greatly annoyed, therefore, when Hardy did not appear at morning chapel; for he had fixed on the leaving chapel as the least unpleasant time in which to begin his confession, and was going to catch Hardy then, and follow him to his rooms. All the morning, too, in answer to his inquiries by his scout Wiggins, Hardy's scout replied that his master was out, or busy. He did not come to the boats, he did not appear in hall; so that, after hall, when Tom went back to his own rooms, as he did at once, instead of sauntering out of college, or going to a wine party, he was quite out of heart at his bad luck, and began to be afraid that he would have to sleep on his unhealed wound another night.

He sat down in an arm-chair, and fell to musing, and thought how wonderfully his life had been changed in these few short weeks. He could hardly get back across the gulf which separated him from the self who had come back into those rooms after Easter, full of anticipations of the pleasures and delights of the coming summer term and vacation. To his own surprise he didn't seem much to regret the loss of his *chateaux en Espange*, and felt a sort of grim satisfaction in their utter overthrow.

While occupied with these thoughts, he heard talking on his stairs, accompanied by a strange lumbering tread. These came nearer; and at last stopped just outside his door, which opened in another moment, and Wiggins announced—

"Capting Hardy, sir."

Tom jumped to his legs, and felt himself color painfully.

"Here, Wiggins," said he, "wheel round that arm-chair for Captain Hardy. I am so very glad to see you, sir," and he hastened round himself to meet the old gentleman, holding out his hand, which the visitor took very cordially, as soon as he had passed his heavy stick to his left hand, and balanced himself safely upon it.

"Thank you, sir; thank you," said the old man after a few moments' pause, "I find your companion ladders rather steep;" and then he sat down with some difficulty.

Tom took the Captain's stick and undress cap, and put them reverentially on his sideboard; and then, to get rid of some little nervousness which he couldn't help feeling, bustled to his cupboard, and helped Wiggins to place

glasses and biscuits on the table. "Now, sir, what will you take? I have port, sherry, and whisky here, and can get you anything else. Wiggins, run to Hinton's and get some dessert."

"No dessert, thank you, for me," said the Captain; "I'll take a cup of coffee, or a glass of grog, or anything you have ready. Don't open wine for me, pray, sir."

"Oh, it is all the better for being opened," said Tom, working away at a bottle of sherry with his corkscrew—"and, Wiggins, get some coffee and anchovy toast in a quarter of an hour; and just put out some tumblers and toddy ladles, and bring up boiling water with the coffee."

While making his hospitable preparations, Tom managed to get many side glances at the old man, who sat looking steadily and abstractly before him into the fireplace, and was much struck and touched by the picture. The sailor wore a well-preserved old undress uniform coat and waistcoat, and white drill trousers; he was a man of middle height, but gaunt and massive, and Tom recognized the framework of the long arms and grand shoulders and chest which he had so often admired in the son. His right leg was quite stiff from an old wound on the knee cap; the left eye was sightless, and the scar of a cutlass travelled down the drooping lid and on to the weather-beaten cheek below. His head was high and broad, his hair and whiskers silver white, while the shaggy eyebrows were scarcely grizzled. His face was deeply lined, and the long, clean-cut lower jaw, and drawn look about the mouth, gave a grim expression to the face at the first glance, which wore off as you looked, leaving, however, on most men who thought about it, the impression which fastened on our hero, "An awkward man to have met at the head of boarders towards the end of the great war."

In a minute or two Tom, having completed his duties, faced the old sailor, much reassured by his covert inspection; and, pouring himself out a glass of sherry, pushed the decanter across, and drank to his guest.

"Your health, sir," he said, "and thank you very much for coming up to see me."

"Thank *you*, sir," said the Captain, rousing himself and filling, "I drink to you, sir. The fact is, I took a great liberty in coming up to your rooms in this off-hand way,

without calling or sending up, but you'll excuse it in an old sailor." Here the Captain took to his glass, and seemed a little embarrassed. Tom felt embarrassed also, feeling that something was coming, and could only think of asking how the Captain liked the sherry. The Captain liked the sherry very much. Then, suddenly clearing his throat, he went on. "I felt, sir, that you would excuse me, for I have a favor to ask of you." He paused again, while Tom muttered something about "great pleasure," and then went on.

"You know my son, Mr. Brown?"

"Yes, sir; he has been my best friend up here; I owe more to him than to any man in Oxford."

The Captain's eye gleamed with pleasure as he replied, "Jack is a noble fellow, Mr. Brown, though I say it who am his father. I've often promised myself a cruise to Oxford since he has been here. I came here at last yesterday, and have been having a long yarn with him. I found there was something on his mind. He can't keep anything from his old father: and so I drew out of him that he loves you as David loved Jonathan. He made my old eye very dim while he was talking of you, Mr. Brown. And then I found that you two are not as you used to be. Some coldness sprung up between you; but what about I couldn't get at. Young men are often hasty—I know I was, forty years ago—Jack says he has been hasty with you. Now, that boy is all I have in the world, Mr. Brown. I know my boy's friend will like to send an old man home with a light heart. So I made up my mind to come over to you and ask you to make it up with Jack. I gave him the slip after dinner and here I am."

"Oh, sir, did he really ask you to come to me?"

"No, sir," said the Captain, "he did not—I am sorry for it—I think Jack must be in the wrong, for he said he had been too hasty, and yet he wouldn't ask me to come to you and make it up. But he is young, sir; young and proud. He said he couldn't move in it, his mind was made up; he was wretched enough over it, but the move must come from you. And so that's the favor I have to ask, that you will make it up with Jack. It isn't often a young man can do such a favor to an old one—to an old father with one son. You'll not feel the worse for having done it, if it's ever so hard to do, when you come to be my age. And the old man looked wistfully across the table, the muscles about his mouth quivering as he ended.

Tom sprang from his chair, and grasped the old sailor's hand, as he felt the load pass out of his heart. "Favor, sir!" he said, "I have been a mad fool enough already in this business—I should have been a double-dyed scoundrel, like enough, by this time but for your son, and I've quarrelled with him for stopping me at the pit's mouth. Favor! If God will, I'll prove somehow where the favor lies, and what I owe to him; and to you, sir, for coming to me to-night. Stop here two minutes, sir, and I'll run down and bring him over."

Tom tore away to Hardy's door and knocked. There was no pausing in the passage now. "Come in." He opened the door but did not enter, and for a moment or two could not speak. The rush of associations which the sight of the well-known old rickety furniture, and the figure which was seated, book in hand, with its back to the door and its feet against one side of the mantel-piece, called up, choked him.

"*May* I come in?" he said at last.

He saw the figure give a start, and the book trembled a little, but then came the answer, slow but firm—

"I have not changed my opinion."

"No; dear old boy, but I have," and Tom rushed across to his friend, dearer than ever to him now, and threw his arm round his neck; and, if the un-English truth must out had three parts of a mind to kiss the rough face which was now working with strong emotion.

"Thank God!" said Hardy, as he grasped the hand which hung over his shoulder.

"And now come over to my room; your father is there waiting for us."

"What, the dear old governor? That's what he has been after, is it? I couldn't think where he could have 'hove to,' as he would say."

Hardy put on his cap, and the two hurried back to Tom's rooms, the lightest hearts in the University of Oxford.

CHAPTER XXI.

CAPTAIN HARDY ENTERTAINED BY ST. AMBROSE.

THERE are moments in the life of the most self-contained and sober of us all, when we fairly bubble over, like a full

bottle of champagne with the cork out; and this was one of them for our hero, who, however, be it remarked, was neither self-contained nor sober by nature. When they got back to his rooms, he really hardly knew what to do to give vent to his lightness of heart; and Hardy, though self-contained and sober enough in general, was on this occasion almost as bad as his friend. They rattled on, talked out the thing which came uppermost, whatever the subject might chance to be; but, whether grave or gay, it always ended after a minute or two in jokes not always good, and chaff, and laughter. The poor captain was a little puzzled at first, and made one or two endeavours to turn the talk into improving channels. But very soon he saw that Jack was thoroughly happy, and that was always enough for him. So he listened to one and the other, joining cheerily in the laugh whenever he could; and when he couldn't catch the joke, looking like a benevolent old lion, and making as much belief that he *had* understood it all as the simplicity and truthfulness of his character would allow.

The spirits of the two friends seemed inexhaustible. They lasted out a the bottle of sherry which Tom had uncorked, and the remains of a bottle of his famous port. He had tried hard to be allowed to open a fresh bottle, but the Captain had made such a point of his not doing so, that he had given in for hospitality's sake. They lasted out the coffee and anchovy toast; after which the Captain made a little effort at moving, which was supplicatingly stopped by Tom.

"Oh, pray don't go, Captain Hardy. I haven't been so happy for months. Besides, I must brew you a glass of grog. I pride myself on my brew. Your son there will tell you that I am a dead hand at it. Here, Wiggins, a lemon!" shouted Tom.

"Well, for once in a way, I suppose, eh, Jack?" said the Captain, looking at his son.

"Oh yes, father. You mayn't know it, Brown, but, if there is one thing harder to do than another, it is to get an old sailor like my father to take a glass of grog at night."

The Captain laughed a little laugh, and shook his thick stick at his son, who went on.

"And as for asking him to take a pipe with it—"

"Dear me," said Tom, "I quite forgot. I really beg your pardon, Captain Hardy; and he put down the lemon he was squeezing, and produced a box of cigars.

The Reconciliation in Tom's Rooms. Captain Hardy [illegible]

"It's all Jack's nonsense, sir," said the Captain, holding out his hand, nevertheless, for the box.

"Now, father, don't be absurd," interrupted Hardy, snatching the box away from him. "You might as well give him a glass of absinthe. He is church-warden at home and can't smoke anything but a long clay."

"I'm very sorry I haven't one here, but I can send out in a minute." And Tom was making for the door to shout for Wiggins.

"No, don't call. I'll fetch some from my rooms."

When Hardy left the room, Tom squeezed away at his lemon, and was preparing himself for a speech to Captain Hardy full of confession and gratitude. But the Captain was before him, and led the conversation into a most unexpected channel.

"I suppose, now, Mr. Brown," he began, "you don't find any difficulty in construing your Thucydides?"

"Indeed, I do, sir," said Tom, laughing. "I find him a very tough old customer, except in the simplest narrative."

"For my part," said the Captain, "I can't get on at all, I find, without a translation. But you see, sir, I had none of the advantages which you young men have up here. In fact, Mr. Brown, I didn't begin Greek till Jack was nearly ten years old." The Captain in his secret heart was prouder of his partial victory over the Greek tongue in his old age, than of his undisputed triumphs over the French in his youth, and was not averse to talking of it.

"I wonder that you ever began it at all, sir," said Tom.

"You wouldn't wonder if you knew how an uneducated man like me feels, when he comes to a place like Oxford."

"Uneducated, sir!" said Tom. "Why your education has been worth twice as much, I'm sure, as any we get here."

"No, sir; we never learnt anything in the navy when I was a youngster, except a little rule-of-thumb mathematics. One picked up a sort of smattering of a language or two knocking about the world, but no grammatical knowledge, nothing scientific. If a boy doesn't get a method, he is beating to windward in a crank craft all his life. He hasn't got any regular place to stow away what he gets into his brains, and so it lies tumbling about in the hold, and he loses it, or it gets damaged and is never ready for use. You see what I mean, Mr. Brown?"

"Yes, sir. But I'm afraid we don't all of us get much method up here. Do you really enjoy reading Thucydides now, Captain Hardy?"

"Indeed I do, sir, very much," said the captain. "There's a great deal in his history to interest an old sailor, you know I dare say, now, that I enjoy those parts about the sea-fights more than you do." The Captain looked at Tom as if he had made an audacious remark.

"I am sure you do, sir," said Tom, smiling.

"Because you see, Mr. Brown," said the Captain, "when one has been in that sort of thing oneself, one likes to read how people in other times managed, and to think what one would have done in their place. I don't believe that the Greeks just at that time were very resolute fighters, though. Nelson or Collingwood would have finished that war in a year or two."

"Not with triremes, do you think, sir?" said Tom.

"Yes, sir, with any vessels which were to be had," said the Captain. "But you are right about triremes. It has always been a great puzzle to me how those triremes could have been worked. How do you understand the three banks of oars, Mr. Brown?"

"Well, sir, I suppose they must have been one above the other somehow."

"But the upper bank must have had oars twenty feet long, and more, in that case," said the Captain. "You must allow for leverage, you see."

"Of course, sir. When one comes to think of it, it isn't easy to see how they were manned and worked," said Tom.

"Now my notion about triremes—" began the Captain, holding the head of his stick with both hands, and looking across at Tom.

"Why, father!" cried Hardy, returning at the moment with the pipes, and catching the Captain's last word, "on one of your hobby horses already! You're not safe!—I can't leave you for two minutes. Here's a long pipe for you. How in the world did he get on triremes?"

"I hardly know," said Tom; "but I want to hear what Captain Hardy thinks about them. You were saying, sir, that the upper oars must have been twenty feet long at least."

"My notion is—" said the Captain, taking the pipe and tobacco-pouch from his son's hand.

"Stop one moment," said Hardy; "I found Blake at my rooms, and asked him to come over here. You don't object?"

"Object, my dear fellow! I'm much obliged to you. Now, Hardy, would you like to have any one else?. I can send in a minute."

"No one, thank you."

"You won't stand on ceremony now, will you, with me?" said Tom.

"You see I haven't."

"And you never will again?"

"No, never. Now, father, you can heave ahead about those oars."

The Captain went on charging his pipe, and proceeded: "You see, Mr. Brown, they must have been at least twenty feet long, because, if you allow the lowest bank of oars to have been three feet above the water-line, which even Jack thinks they must have been—"

"Certainly. That height at least to do any good," said Hardy.

"Not that I think Jack's opinion worth much on the point," went on his father.

"It's very ungrateful of you, then, to say so, father," said Hardy, "after all the time I've wasted trying to make it all clear to you."

"I don't say that Jack's is not a good opinion on most things, Mr. Brown," said the Captain; "but he is all at sea about triremes. He believes that the men of the uppermost bank rowed somehow like lightermen on the Thames, walking up and down."

"I object to your statement of my faith, father." said Hardy.

"Now you know, Jack, you have said so, often."

"I have said they must have stood up to row, and so—"

"You would have had awful confusion, Jack. You must have order between decks when you're going into action. Besides, the rowers had cushions."

"That old heresy of yours again."

"Well, but Jack, they *had* cushions. Didn't the rowers who were marched across the Isthmus to man the ships which were to surprise the Piræus, carry their oars, thongs and cushions?"

"If they did, your conclusion doesn't follow, father, that they sat on them to row."

"You hear, Mr. Brown," said the Captain; "he admits my point about the cushions."

"Oh, father, I hope you used to fight the French more fairly," said Hardy.

"But didn't he? Didn't Jack admit my point?"

"Implicitly, sir, I think" said Tom, catching Hardy's eye, which was dancing with fun.

"Of course he did. You hear that, Jack. Now my notion about triremes—"

A knock at the door interrupted the Captain again, and Blake came in and was introduced.

"Mr. Blake is almost our best scholar, father; you should appeal to him about the cushions."

"I am very proud to make your acquaintance, sir," said the Captain; "I have heard my son speak of you often."

"We were talking about trirenes," said Tom; "Captain Hardy thinks the oars must have been twenty feet long."

"Not easy to come forward well with that sort of oar," said Blake; "they must have pulled a slow stroke."

"Our torpid would have bumped the best of them," said Hardy.

"I don't think they could have made more than six knots," said the Captain; "but yet they used to sink one another, and a light boat going only six knots couldn't break another in two amid-ships. It's a puzzling subject, Mr. Blake."

"It is, sir," said Mr. Blake; "if we only had some of their fo'castle songs we should know more about it. I'm afraid they had no Dibdin."

"I wish you would turn one of my father's favorite songs into anapæsts for him," said Hardy.

"What are they?" said Blake.

"'Tom Bowling,' or 'The wind that blows, and the ship that goes, and the lass that loves a sailor.'"

"By the way, why shouldn't we have a song?" said Tom. "What do you say, Captain Hardy?"

The Captain winced a little as he saw his chance of expounding his notion as to triremes slipping away, but answered:

"By all means, sir; Jack must sing for me though. Did you ever hear him sing 'Tom Bowling!'"

"No, never, sir. Why, Hardy, you never told me you could sing."

"You never asked me," said Hardy, laughing; "but if I sing for my father, he must spin us a yarn."

"Oh yes; will you, sir!"

"I'll do my best, Mr. Brown; but I don't know that you'll care to listen to my old yarns. Jack thinks everybody must like them as well as he, who used to hear them when he was a child."

"Thank you, sir; that's famous. Now Hardy, strike up."

"After you. You must set the example in your own rooms."

So Tom sang his song. And the noise brought Drysdale and another man up, who were loitering in quad on the lookout for something to do. Drysdale and the Captain recognised one another, and were friends at once. And then Hardy sang "Tom Bowling," in a style which astonished the rest not a little, and as usual nearly made his father cry; and Blake sang, and Drysdale and the other man. And then the Captain was called on for his yarn; and, the general voice being for "something that had happened to him," "the strangest thing that had ever happened to him at sea," and the old gentleman laid down his pipe and sat up in his chair with his hands on his stick and began.

THE CAPTAIN'S STORY.

It will be forty years ago next month since the ship I was then in came home from the West Indies station, and was paid off. I had nowhere in particular to go just then, and so was very glad to get a letter, the morning after I went ashore at Portsmouth, asking me to go down to Plymouth for a week or so. It came from an old sailor, a friend of my family, who had been Commodore of the fleet. He lived at Plymouth; he was a thorough old sailor—what you young men would call "an old salt"—and couldn't live out of sight of the blue sea and the shipping. It is a disease that a good many of us take who have spent our best years on the sea. I have it myself—a sort of feeling that we want to be under another kind of Providence, when we look out and see a hill on this side and a hill on that. It's wonderful to see the trees come out and the corn grow, but then it doesn't come so home to an old sailor. I know that we're all just as much under the Lord's hand on shore as at sea; but you can't read in a book you haven't been used to, and

they that go down to the sea in ships, they see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep. It isn't their fault if they don't see his wonders on the land so easily as other people.

But, for all that, there's no man enjoys a cruise in the country more than a sailor. It's forty years ago since I started for Plymouth, but I haven't forgotton the road a bit or how beautiful it was; all through the New Forest, and over Salisbury Plain, and then by the mail to Exeter, and through Devonshire. It took me three days to get to Plymouth, for we didn't get about so quick in those days.

The Commodore was very kind to me when I got there, and I went about with him to the ships in the bay, and through the dock-yard, and picked up a good deal that was of use to me afterwards. I was a lieutenant in those days, and had seen a good deal of service, and I found the old Commodore had a great nephew whom he had adopted, and had set his whole heart upon. He was an old bachelor himself, but the boy had come to live with him, and was to go to sea; so he wanted to put him under some one who would give an eye to him for the first year or two. He was a light slip of a boy then, fourteen years old, with deep set blue eyes and long eyelashes, and cheeks like a girl's, but brave as a lion and as merry as a lark. The old gentleman was very pleased to see that we took to one another. We used to bathe and boat together; and he was never tired of hearing my stories about the great admirals, and the fleet, and the stations I had been on.

Well, it was agreed that I should apply for a ship again directly, and go up to London with a letter to the Admiralty from the Commodore, to help things on. After a month or two I was appointed to a brig, lying at Spithead; and so I wrote off to the Commodore and he got his boy a midshipman's berth on board, and brought him to Portsmouth himself a day or two before we sailed for the Mediterranean. The old gentleman came on board to see the boy's hammock slung, and went below into the cockpit to make sure that all was right. He only left us by the pilot boat when we were well out in the Channel. He was very low at parting with his boy, but bore up as well as he could and we promised to write to him from Gibraltar, and as often afterwards as we had a chance.

I was soon as proud and fond of little Tom Holdsworth as if he had been my own younger brother; and, for tha

matter, so were all the crew, from our captain to the cook's boy. He was such a gallant youngster, and yet so gentle. In one cutting-out business we had, he climbed over the boatswain's shoulder, and was almost first on deck; how he came out of it without a scratch I can't think to this day. But he hadn't a bit of bluster in him, and was as kind as a woman to any one who was wounded or down with sickness.

After we had been out about a year we were sent to cruise off Malta, on the look-out for the French fleet. It was a long business, and the post wasn't so good then as it is now. We were sometimes for months without getting a letter, and knew nothing of what was happening at home, or anywhere else. We had a sick time too on board, and at last he got a fever. He bore up against it like a man, and wouldn't knock off duty for a long time. He was midshipman of my watch; so I used to make him turn in early, and tried to ease things to him as much as I could; but he didn't pick up, and I began to get very anxious about him. I talked to the doctor, and turned matters over in my own mind, and at last I came to think he wouldn't get any better unless he could sleep out of the cockpit. So one night, the 20th of October it was—I remember it well enough, better than I remember any day since; it was a dirty night, blowing half a gale of wind from the southward, and we were under close-reefed top-sails—I had the first watch, and at nine o'clock I sent him down to my cabin to sleep there, where he would be fresher and quieter, and I was to turn into his hammock when my watch was over.

I was on deck three hours or so after he went down, and the weather got dirtier and dirtier, and the scud drove by, and the wind sang and hummed through the rigging—it made me melancholy to listen to it. I could thing of nothing but the youngster down below, and what I should say to his poor old uncle if anything happened. Well, soon after midnight I went down and turned into his hammock. I didn't go to sleep at once, for I remember very well listening to the creaking of the ship's timbers as she rose to the swell, and watching the lamp, which was slung from the ceiling, and gave light enough to make out the other hammocks swinging slowly altogether. At last, however, I dropped off, and I reckon I must have been asleep about an hour, when I woke with a start. For the first moment I didn't see anything but the swinging hammocks and the

lamp; but then suddenly I became aware that some one was standing by my hammock, and I saw the figure as plainly as I see any one of you now, for the foot of the hammock was close to the lamp, and the light struck full across on the head and shoulders, which was all that I could see of him. There he was, the old Commodore; his grizzled hair coming out from under a red woolen nightcap, and his shoulders wrapped in an old thread-bare blue dressing-gown which I had often seen him in. His face looked pale and drawn, and there was a wistful disappointed look about the eyes. I was so taken aback I could not speak, but lay watching him. He looked full at my face once or twice, but didn't seem to recognise me; and, just as I was getting back my tongue and going to speak, he said slowly: "Where's Tom? this is his hammock. I can't see Tom;" and then he looked vaguely about and passed away somehow, but how, I couldn't see. In a moment or two I jumped out and hurried to my cabin, but young Holdsworth was fast asleep. I sat down, and wrote down just what I had seen, making a note of the exact time, twenty minutes to two. I didn't turn in again, but sat watching the youngster. When he woke I asked him if he had heard anything of his great uncle by the last mail. Yes, he had heard; the old gentleman was rather feeble, but nothing particular the matter. I kept my own counsel and never told a soul in the ship; and, when the mail came to hand a few days afterwards with a letter from the Commodore to his nephew, dated late in September, saying that he was well, I thought the figure by my hammock must have been all my own fancy.

However, by the next mail came the news of the old Commodore's death. It had been a very sudden break up, his executor said. He had left all his property, which was not much to his great nephew, who was to get leave to come home as soon as he could.

The first time we touched at Malta, Tom Holdsworth left us and went home. We followed about two years afterwards, and the first thing I did after landing was to find out the Commodore's executor. He was a quiet, dry little Plymouth lawyer, and very civilly answered all my questions about the last days of my old friend. At last I asked him to tell me as near as he could the time of his death; and he put on his spectacles, and got his diary, and turned over the leaves. I was quite nervous till he looked

up and said,—"Twenty-five minutes to two, sir, A. M., on the morning of October 21st; or it might be a few minutes later."

"How do you mean, sir?" I asked.

"Well," he said, "it is an odd story. The doctor was sitting with me, watching the old man, and, as I tell you, at twenty-five minutes to two, he got up and said it was all over. We stood together, talking in whispers for, it might be, four or five minutes, when the body seemed to move. He was an odd old man, you know, the Commodore, and we never could get him properly to bed, but he lay in his red nightcap and old dressing-gown, with a blanket over him. It was not a pleasant sight, I can tell you, sir. I don't think one of you gentlemen, who are bred to face all manner of dangers, would have liked it. As I was saying, the body first moved, and then sat up, propping itself behind with its hands. The eyes were wide open, and he looked at us for a moment, and said slowly, 'I've been to the Mediterranean, but I didn't see Tom.' Then the body sank back again, and this time the old Commodore was really dead. But it was not a pleasant thing to happen to one sir. I do not remember anything like it in my forty years' practice."

CHAPTER XXII.

DEPARTURES EXPECTED AND UNEXPECTED.

THERE was a silence of a few seconds after the Captain had finished his story, all the men sitting with eyes fixed on him, and not a little surprised at the results of their call. Drysdale was the first to break the silence, which he did with a "By George!" and a long respiration; but, as he did not seem prepared with any further remark, Tom took up the running.

"What a strange story," he said; "and that really happened to you, Captain Hardy?"

"To me sir, in the Mediterranean, more than forty years ago."

"The strangest thing about it is that the old Commodore should have managed to get all the way to the ship, and then not have known where his nephew was," said Blake,

"He only knew his nephew's berth, you see, sir," said the Captain.

"But he might have beat about through the ship till he had found him."

"You must remember that he was at his last breath, sir," said the Capain; "you can't expect a man to have his head clear at such a moment."

"Not a man, perhaps; but I should a ghost," said Blake.

"Time was everything to him," went on the Captain, without regarding the interruption, "space nothing. But the strangest part of it is that *I* should have seen the figure at all. It's true I had been thinking of the old uncle, because of the boy's illness; but I can't suppose he was thinking of me, and, as I say, he never recognized me. I have taken a great deal of interest in such matters since that time, but I have never met with just such a case as this."

"No, that is the puzzle. One can fancy his appearing to his nephew well enough," said Tom.

"We can't account for these things, or for a good many other things which ought to be quite as startling, only we see them every day. But now I think it is time for us to be going, eh Jack?" and the Captain and his son rose to go.

Tom saw that it would be no kindness to them to try to prolong the sitting, and so he got up too, to accompany them to the gates. This broke up the party. Before going, Drysdale, after whispering to Tom, went up to Captain Hardy, and said,—

"I want to ask you to do me a favour, sir. Will you and your son breakfast with me to-morrow?"

"We shall be very happy, sir," said the Captain.

"I think, father, you had better breakfast with me, quietly. We are much obliged to Mr. Drysdale, but I can't give up a whole morning. Besides, I have several things to talk to you about."

"Nonsense, Jack," blurted out the old sailor, "leave your books alone for one morning. I'm come up here to enjoy myself, and see your friends."

Hardy gave a slight shrug of his shoulders at the word friends, and Drysdale, who saw it, looked a little confused. He had never asked Hardy to his rooms before. The Captain saw that something was the matter, and hastened in his own way to make all smooth again.

"Never mind Jack, sir," he said, "he shall come. It's a

great treat to me to be with young men, especially when they are friends of my boy."

"I hope you'll come as a personal favor to me," said Drysdale, turning to Hardy. "Brown, you'll bring him, won't you?"

"Oh yes, I'm sure he'll come," said Tom.

"That's all right. Good night, then;" and Drysdale went off.

Hardy and Tom accompanied the Captain to the gate. During his passage across the two quadrangles, the old gentleman was full of the praises of the men and of protestations as to the improvement in social manners and customs since his day, when there could have been no such meeting, he declared, without blackguardism and drunkenness, at least among young officers; but then they had less to think of than Oxford men, no proper education. And so the Captain was evidently traveling back into the great trireme question when they reached the gate. As they could go no farther with him, however, he had to carry away his solution of the three-banks-of oars difficulty in his own bosom to the Mitre.

"Don't let us go in," said Tom, as the gate closed on the Captain, and they turned back into the quadrangle, "let us take a turn or two;" so they walked up and down the inner quad in the starlight.

Just at first they were a good deal embarrassed and confused; but before long, though not without putting considerable force on himself, Tom got back into something like his old familiar way of unbosoming himself to his re-found friend, and Hardy showed more than his old anxiety to meet him half-way. His ready and undisguised sympathy soon dispersed the remaining clouds which were still hanging between them; and Tom found it almost a pleasure, instead of a dreary task, as he had anticipated, to make a full confession, and state the case clearly and strongly against himself to one who claimed neither by word nor look the least superiority over him, and never seemed to remember that he himself had been ill-treated in the matter.

"He had such a chance of lecturing me and didn't do it," thought Tom afterwards, when he was considering why he felt so very grateful to Hardy. "It was so cunning of him, too. If he had begun lecturing, I should have begun to defend myself, and never have felt half such a scamp as I did when I was telling it all out to him in my own way."

The result of Hardy's management was that Tom made a clean breast of it, telling everything down to his night at the ragged school; and what an effect his chance-opening of the "Apology" had had on him. Here for the first time Hardy came in with his usual dry, keen voice. "You needn't have gone so far back as Plato for that lesson."

"I don't understand," said Tom.

"Well, there's something about an indwelling spirit which guideth every man, in St. Paul, isn't there?"

"Yes, a great deal," Tom answered, after a pause; "but it isn't the same thing."

"Why not the same thing?"

"Oh, surely you must feel it. It would be almost blasphemy in us to talk as St. Paul talked. It is much easier to face the notion, or the fact, of a dæmon or spirit such as Socrates felt to be in him. than to face what St. Paul seems to be meaning."

"Yes, much easier. The only question is whether we will be heathens or not."

"How do you mean?" said Tom.

"Why, a spirit was speaking to Socrates, and guiding him. He obeyed the guidance, but knew not whence it came. A spirit is striving with us too, and trying to guide us—we feel that just as much as he did. Do we know what spirit it is? whence it comes? Will we obey it. If we can't name it—know no more of it then he knew about his dæmon, of course, we are in no better position than he—in fact, heathens."

Tom made no answer, and after a slight turn or two more, Hardy said, "Let us go in;" and they went to his rooms. When the candles were lighted, Tom saw the array of books on the table, several of them open, and remembered how near the examinations were.

"I see you want to work," he said. "Well, good-night. I know how fellows like you hate being thanked—there, you needn't wince; I'm not going to try it on. The best way to thank you, I know, is to go straight for the future. I'll do that, please God, this time at any rate. Now what ought I to do, Hardy?"

"Well, it's very hard to say. I've thought about it a great deal this last few days—since I felt you coming round—but I can't make up my mind. How do you feel yourself? What's your own instinct about it?"

"Of course, I must break it all off at once, completely,',

said Tom, mournfully, and half hoping that Hardy might not agree with him.

"Of course," answered Hardy, "but how?"

"In the way that will pain her least. I would sooner lose my hand or bite my tongue off than that she should feel lowered, or lose any self-respect, you know," said Tom, looking helplessly at his friend.

"Yes, that's all right--you must take all you can on your own shoulders. It must leave a sting though for both of you, manage how you will."

"But I can't bear to let her think I don't care for her—I needn't do that—I can't do that."

"I don't know what to advise. However, I believe I was wrong in thinking she cared for you so much. She will be hurt, of course—she can't help being hurt—but it won't be so bad as I used to think."

Tom made no answer; in spite of all his good resolutions, he was a little piqued at this last speech. Hardy went on presently. "I wish she were well out of Oxford. It's a bad town for a girl to be living in, especially as a barmaid in a place which we haunt. I don't know that she will take much harm now; but it's a very trying thing for a girl of that sort to be thrown every day amongst a dozen young men above her in rank, and not one in ten of whom has any manliness about him."

"How do you mean—no manliness?"

"I mean that a girl in her position isn't safe with us. If we had any manliness in us she would be—"

"You can't expect all men to be blocks of ice, or milksops," said Tom, who was getting nettled.

"Don't think that I meant you," said Hardy; "indeed I didn't. But surely, think a moment; is it a proof of manliness that the pure and weak should fear you and shrink from you? Which is the true--aye, and the brave—man, he who trembles before a woman or he before whom a woman trembles?"

"Neither," said Tom; "but I see what you mean, and when you put it that way it's clear enough."

"But you're wrong in saying 'neither' if you do see what I mean." Tom was silent. "Can there be any true manliness without purity?" went on Hardy. Tom drew a deep breath but said nothing. "And where then can you point to a place where there is so little manliness as here? It makes my blood boil to see what one must see every day. There

are a set of men up here, and have been ever since I can remember the place, not one of whom can look at a modest woman without making her shudder."

"There must always be some blackguards," said Tom.

"Yes; but unluckily the blackguards set the fashion, and give the tone to public opinion. I'm sure both of us have seen enough to know perfectly well that up here, amongst us undergraduates, men who are deliberately and avowedly profligates, are rather admired and courted,—are said to know the world, and all that,—while a man who tries to lead a pure life, and makes no secret of it, is openly sneered at by them, looked down on more or less by the great mass of men, and, to use the word you used just now, thought a milksop by almost all."

"I don't think it so bad as that," said Tom. "There are many men who would respect him, though they might not be able to follow him."

"Of course, I never meant that there are not many such, but they don't set the fashion. I am sure I'm right. Let us try it by the best test. Haven't you and I in our secret hearts this cursed feeling, that the sort of man we are talking about is a milksop?"

"After a moment's thought, Tom answered, "I am afraid I have, but I really am thoroughly ashamed of it now, Hardy. But you haven't it. If you had it you could never have spoken to me as you have."

"I beg your pardon. No man is more open than I to the bad influences of any place he lives in. God knows I am even as other men, and worse; for I have been taught ever since I could speak, that the crown of all real manliness, of all Christian manliness, is purity."

Neither of the two spoke for some minutes. Then Hardy looked at his watch—

"Past eleven," he said. "I must do some work. Well, Brown, this will be a day to be remembered in my calendar."

Tom wrung his hand, but did not venture to reply. As he got to the door, however, he turned back, and said—

"Do you think I ought to write to her?"

"Well, you can try. You'll find it a bitter business, I fear."

"I'll try then. Good night."

Tom went to his own rooms, and set to work to write his letter; and certainly found it as difficult and unpleasant a task as he had ever set himself to work upon. Half a dozen times he tore up sheet after sheet of his attempts; and got up and walked about, and plunged and kicked mentally against the collar and traces in which he had harnessed himself by his friend's help,—trying to convince himself that Hardy was a Puritan, who had lived quite differently from other men, and knew nothing of what a man ought to do in a case like this. That after all very little harm had been done! The world would never go on at all if people were to be so scrupulous! Probably, not another man in the college, except Grey, perhaps, would think anything of what he had done!—Done! why, what had he done? He couldn't be taking it more seriously if he had ruined her!

At this point he managed to bring himself up sharp again more than once. "No thanks to *me* at any rate, that she isn't ruined. Had I any pity, any scruples? My God, what a mean, selfish rascal I have been!" and then he sat down again, and wrote, and scratched out what he had written, till the other fit came on, and something of the same process had to be gone through again.

We must all recognize the process, and remember many occasions on which we have had to put bridle and bit on, and ride ourselves as if we had been horses or mules without understanding; and what a trying business it was—as bad as getting a young colt past a gipsy encampment in a narrow lane.

At last, after many trials, Tom got himself well in hand, and produced something which seemed to satisfy him; for, after reading it three or four times, he put it in a cover with a small case, which he produced from his desk, sealed it, directed it, and then went to bed.

Next morning, after chapel, he joined Hardy, and walked to his rooms with him, and after a few words on indifferent matters, said—

"Well, I wrote my letter last night."

"Did you satisfy yourself?"

"Yes, I think so. I don't know, though, on second thoughts: it was very tough work."

"I was afraid you would find it so."

"But wouldn't you like to see it?"

"No thank you. I suppose my father will be here directly."

"But I wish you would read it through," said Tom, producing a copy.

"Well, if you wish it, I suppose I must; but I don't see how I can do any good."

Hardy took the letter, and sat down, and Tom drew a chair close to him, and watched his face while he read:—

"It is best for us both that I should not see you any more, at least at present. I feel that I have done you a great wrong. I dare not say much to you, for fear of making that wrong greater. I cannot, I need not tell you how I despise myself now—how I long to make you any amends in my power. If ever I can be of any service to you, I do hope that nothing which has passed will hinder you from applying to me. You will not believe how it pains me to write this; how should you? I don't deserve that you should believe anything I say. I must seem heartless to you; I have been, I am heartless. I hardly know what I am writing. I shall long all my life to hear good news of you. I don't ask you to pardon me, but if you can prevail on yourself not to send back the enclosed, and will keep it as a small remembrance of one who is deeply sorry for the wrong he has done you, but who cannot and will not say he is sorry he ever met you, you will be adding another to the many kindnesses which I have to thank you for, and which I shall never forget."

Hardy read it over several times, as Tom watched impatiently, unable to make out anything from his face.

"What do you think? You don't think there's anything wrong in it, I hope?"

"No, indeed, my dear follow. I really think it does you credit. I don't know what else you could have said very well, only—"

"Only what?"

"Couldn't you have made it a little shorter?"

"No, I couldn't; but you don't mean that. What did you mean by that 'only'?"

"Why, I don't think this letter will end the business; at least, I'm afraid not."

"But what more could I have said?"

"Nothing *more*, certainly; but couldn't you have been a little quieter—it's difficult to get the right word—a little cooler, perhaps. Couldn't you have made the part about not seeing her again a little more decided?"

"But you said I needn't pretend I didn't care for her."

"Did I?"

"Yes. Besides, it would have been a lie."

"I don't want you to tell a lie, certainly. But how about this 'small remembrance' that you speak of? What's that?"

"Oh, nothing; only a little locket I bought for her."

"With some of your hair in it?"

"Well, of course. Come now, there's no harm in that."

"No; no harm. Do you think she will wear it?"

"How can I tell?"

"It may make her think it isn't all at an end, I'm afraid. If she always wears your hair—"

"By Jove, you're too bad, Hardy. I wish you had had to write it yourself. It's all very easy to pull my letter to pieces, I dare say, but—"

"I didn't want to read it, remember."

"No more you did. I forgot. But I wish you would just write down now what you would have said."

"Yes, I think I see myself at it. By the way, of course you have sent your letter?"

"Yes, I sent it off before chapel."

"I thought so. In that case I don't think we need trouble ourselves further with the form of the document."

"Oh, that's only shirking. How do you know I may not want it for the next occasion?"

"No no! Don't let us begin laughing about it. A man never ought to have to write such letters twice in his life. If he has, why, he may get a good enough precedent for the second out of the 'Complete Letter Writer.'"

"So you won't correct my copy?"

"No, not I."

At this point in their dialogue, Captain Hardy appeared on the scene, and the party went off to Drysdale's to breakfast.

Captain Hardy's visit to St. Ambrose was a great success. He stayed some four or five days, and saw everything that was to be seen, and enjoyed it all in a sort of reverent way which was almost comic. Tom devoted himself to the work of cicerone, and did his best to do the work thoroughly. Oxford was a sort of Utopia to the Captain, who was resolutely bent on seeing nothing but beauty and learning and wisdom within the precincts of the University. On one or two occasions his faith was tried sorely by the sight of young gentlemen gracefully apparelled, dawdling along

two together in low easy pony carriages, or lying on their backs in punts for hours, smoking, with not even a *Bell's Life* by them to pass the time. Dawdling and doing nothing were the objects of his special abhorrence; but with this trifling exception the Captain continued steadily to behold towers and quadrangles, and chapels, and the inhabitants of the colleges, through rose-colored spectacles. His respect for a "regular education," and for the seat of learning at which it was dispensed was so strong, that he invested not only the tutors, doctors, and proctors (of whom he saw little except at a distance), but even the most empty-headed undergraduate whose acquaintance he made, with a sort of fancy halo of scientific knowledge, and often talked to those youths in a way which was curiously bewildering and embarrassing to them. Drysdale was particularly hit by it. He had humour and honesty enough himself to appreciate the Captain, but it was a constant puzzle to him to know what to make of it all.

"He's a regular old brick, is the Captain," he said to Tom, on the last evening of the old gentleman's visit; "but by Jove, I can't help thinking he must be poking fun at us half his time. It is rather too rich to hear him talking on as if we were all as fond of Greek as he seems to be, and as if no man ever got drunk up here."

"I declare I think he believes it," said Tom. "You see we're all careful enough before him."

"That son of his too must be a good fellow. Don't you see he can never have peached. His father was telling me last night what a comfort it was to him to see that Jack's poverty had been no drawback to him. He had always told him it would be so amongst English gentlemen, and now he found him living quietly and independently, and yet on equal terms, and friends, with men far above him in rank and fortune 'like you, sir,' the old boy said. By Jove, Brown, I felt devilish foolish. I believe I blushed, and it isn't often I indulge in that sort of luxury. If I weren't ashamed of doing it now, I should try to make friends with Hardy. But I don't know how to face him, and I doubt whether he wouldn't think me too much of a rip to be intimate with."

Tom at his own special request attended the Captain's departure, and took his seat opposite to him and his son at the back of the Southampton coach, to accompany him a few miles out of Oxford. For the first mile the Captain

was full of the pleasures of his visit, and of invitations to Tom to come and see them in the vacation. If he did not mind homely quarters he would find a hearty welcome, and there was no finer bathing or boating place on the coast. If he liked to bring his gun, there were plenty of rock-pigeons and sea-otters in the caves at the Point. Tom protested with the greatest sincerity that there was nothing he should enjoy so much. Then the young men got down to walk up Bagley Hill, and when they mounted again found the Captain with a large leather case in his hand, out of which he took two five-pound notes, and began pressing them on his son, while Tom tried to look as if he did not know what was going on. For some time Hardy steadily refused, and the contention became animated, and it was useless to pretend any longer not to hear.

"Why, Jack, you're not too proud I hope, to take a present from you own father," the Captain said at last.

"But, my dear father, I don't want the money. You make me a very good allowance already."

"Now, Jack, just listen to me and be resonable. You know a great many of your friends have been very hospitable to me: I could not return their hospitality myself, but I wish you to do so for me."

"Well, father, I can do that without this money."

"Now, Jack," said the Captain, pushing forward the notes again, "I insist on your taking them. You will pain me very much if you don't take them."

So the son took the notes at last, looking as most men of his age would if they had just lost them, while the father's face was radiant as he replaced his pocket book in the breast pocket inside his coat. His eye caught Tom's in the midst of the operation, and the latter could not help looking a little confused, as if he had been unintentionally obtruding on their privacy. But the Captain at once laid his hand on his knee and said—

"A young fellow is never the worse for having a ten-pound note to veer and haul on, eh, Mr. Brown?"

"No, indeed, sir. A great deal better I think," said Tom, and was quite comfortable again. The Captain had no new coat that summer, but he always looked like a gentlemen.

Soon the coach stopped to take up a parcel at a cross-road, and the young men got down. They stood watching it until it disappeared round a corner of the road, and then turned back towards Oxford, and struck into Bagley Wood,

Hardy listening with evident pleasure to his friend's enthusiastic praise of his father. But he was not in a talking humor, and they were soon walking along together in silence.

This was the first time they had been alone together since the morning after their reconciliation; so presently Tom seized the occasion to recur to the subject which was uppermost in his thoughts.

"She has never answered my letter," he began abruptly.

"I am very glad of it," said Hardy.

"But why?"

"Because you know, you want it all broken off completely."

"Yes, but still she might have just acknowledged it. You don't know how hard it is to me to keep away from the place."

"My dear fellow, I know it must be hard work, but you are doing the right thing."

"Yes, I hope so," said Tom, with a sigh. "I haven't been within a hundred yards of 'The Choughs' this five days. The old lady must think it so odd."

Hardy made no reply. What could he say but that no doubt she did?

"Would you mind doing me a great favor?" said Tom, after a minute.

"Anything I can do.—What is it?"

"Why, just to step round on our way back,—I will stay as far off as you like,—and see how things are going on;—how she is."

"Very well. Don't you like this view of Oxford? I always think it is the best of them all."

"No. You don't see anything of half the colleges," said Tom, who was very loth to leave the other subject for the picturesque.

"But you get all the spires and towers so well, and the river in the foreground. Look at that shadow of a cloud skimming over Christchurch Meadow. It's a splendid old place after all."

"It may be from a distance, to an outsider," said Tom; "but I don't know—it's an awfully chilly, deadening kind of place to live in. There's something in the life of the place that sits on me like a weight, and makes me feel dreary."

"How long have you felt that? You're coming out in a new line."

"I wish I were. I want a new line. I don't care a straw for cricket; I hardly like pulling; and as for those wine parties day after day, and suppers night after night, they turn me sick to think of."

"You have the remedy in your own hands, at any rate," said Hardy, smiling.

"How do you mean?"

"Why, you needn't go to them."

"Oh, one can't help going to them. What else is there to do!"

Tom waited for an answer, but his companion only nodded to show that he was listening, as he strolled on down the path, looking at the view.

"I can say what I feel to you, Hardy. I always have been able, and it's such a comfort to me now. It was you who put these sort of thoughts into my head too, so you ought to sympathize with me."

"I do, my dear fellow. But you'll be all right again in a few days."

"Don't you believe it. It isn't only what you seem to think, Hardy. You don't know me so well as I do you, after all. No, I'm not just love-sick, and hipped because I can't go and see her. That has something to do with it, I dare say, but it's the sort of shut-up selfish life we lead here that I can't stand. A man isn't meant to live only with fellows like himself, with good allowances paid quarterly, and no care but how to amuse themselves. One is old enough for something better than that, I'm sure."

"No doubt," said Hardy with provoking taciturnity.

"And the moment one tries to break through it, one only gets into trouble."

"Yes, there's a good deal of danger of that, certainly," said Hardy.

"Don't you often long to be in contact with some of the realities of life, with men and women who haven't their bread and butter already cut for them? How can a place be a university where no one can come up who hasn't two hundred a year or so to live on?"

"You ought to have been at Oxford four hundred years ago, when there were more thousands here than we have hundreds."

"I don't see that. It must have been ten times as bad then."

"Not at all. But it must have been a very different state

of things from ours; they must have been almost all poor scholars, who worked for their living, or lived on next to nothing."

"How do you really suppose they lived though?"

"Oh, I don't know. But how should you like it now, if we had fifty poor scholars at St. Ambrose, besides us servitors—say ten tailors, ten shoemakers, and so on, who came up from love of learning, and attended all the lectures with us, and worked for the present undergraduates while they were hunting, and cricketing, and boating?"

"Well, I think it would be a very good thing—at any rate, we should save in tailors' bills."

"Even if we didn't get our coats so well built," said Hardy, laughing. "Well, Brown, you have a most catholic taste, and 'a capacity for taking in new truths,' all the elements of a good Radical in you."

"I tell you I hate Radicals," said Tom, indignantly.

"Well, here we are in the town. I'll go round by 'The Choughs' and catch you up before you get to High Street."

Tom, left to himself, walked slowly on for a little way, and then quickly back again in an impatient, restless manner, and was within a few yards of the corner where they had parted when Hardy appeared again. He saw at a glance that something had happened.

"What is it—she is not ill?" he said quickly.

"No; quite well, her aunt says."

"You didn't see her then?"

"No. The fact is she has gone home."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE ENGLEBOURN CONSTABLE.

On the afternoon of a splendid day in the early part of June, some four or five days after the Sunday on which the morning service at Englebourn was interrupted by the fire at Farmer Groves', David Johnson, tailor and constable of the parish, was sitting at his work in a small erection, half shed, half summer-house, which leaned against the back of his cottage. Not that David had not a regular workshop with a window looking into the village street, and a regular

counter close under it, on which passers-by might see him stitching, and from which he could gossip with them easily, as was his wont. But although the constable kept the king's peace and made garments of all kinds for his livelihood—from the curate's frock down to the ploughboy's fustians—he was addicted for his pleasure and solace to the keeping of bees. The constable's bees inhabited a row of hives in the narrow strip of garden which ran away at the back of the cottage. This strip of garden was bordered along the whole of one side by the rector's premises. Now honest David loved gossip well, and considered it a part of his duty as constable to be well up in all events and rumours which happened or arose within his liberties. But he loved his bees better than gossip, and, as he was now in hourly expectation that they would be swarming, was working, as has been said, in his summer-house, that he might be at hand at the critical moment. The rough table on which he was seated commanded a view of the hives; his big scissors and some shreds of velveteen lay near him on the table, also the street-door key and an old shovel, of which the uses will appear presently.

On his knees lay the black velveteen coat, the Sunday garment of Harry Winburn, to which he was fitting new sleeves. In his exertions at the top of the chimney in putting out the fire Harry had grievously damaged the garment in question. The farmer had presented him with five shillings on the occasion, which sum was quite inadequate to the purchase of a new coat, and Harry, being too proud to call the farmer's attention to the special damage which he had suffered in his service, had contented himself with bringing his old coat to be new sleeved.

Harry was a favorite with the constable on account of his intelligence and independence, and because of his relations with the farmers of Englebourn on the allotment question. Although by his office the representative of law and order in the parish, David was a man of the people, and sympathized with the peasantry more than with the farmers. He had passed some years of his apprenticeship at Reading, where he had picked up notions on political and social questions much ahead of the Englebourn worthies. When he returned to his native village, being a wise man, he had kept his new lights in the background, and consequently had succeeded in the object of his ambition, and had been appointed constable. His reason for seeking the post was a

desire to prove that the old joke as to the manliness of tailors had no application to his case, and this he had established to the satisfaction of all the neighborhood by the resolute manner in which, whenever called on, he performed his duties. And, now that his character was made and his position secure, he was not so careful of betraying his leanings, and had lost some custom amongst the farmers in consequence of them.

The job on which he was employed naturally turned his thoughts to Harry. He stitched away, now weighing in his mind whether he should not go himself to Farmer Groves, and represent to him that he ought to give Harry a new coat; now rejoicing over the fact that the rector had decided to let Harry have another acre of the allotment land; now speculating on the attachment of his favorite to the gardner's daughter, and whether he could do anything to forward his suit. In the pursuit of which thoughts he had forgotten all about his bees, when suddenly a great humming arose, followed by a rush through the air like the passing of an express train, which recalled him to himself. He jumped from the table, casting aside the coat, and, seizing the key and shovel, hurried out into the garden, beating the two together with all his might.

The process in question, known in country phrase as "tanging," is founded upon the belief that the bees will not settle unless under the influence of this peculiar music; and the constable, holding faithfully to the popular belief, rushed down his garden, "tanging" as though his life depended upon it, in the hopes that the soothing sound would induce the swarm to settle at once on his own apple trees.

Is "tanging" a superstition or not? People learned in bees ought to know, but I never happened to meet one who had settled the question. It is curious how such beliefs or superstitions fix themselves in the popular mind of a country side, and are held by wise and simple alike. David the constable was a most sensible and open-minded man of his time and class, but Kemble or Akerman, or other learned Anglo-Saxon scholars would have vainly explained to him that "tang," is but the old word for "to hold," and that the object of "tanging" is, not to lure the bees with sweet music of key and shovel, but to give notice to the neighbors that they have swarmed, and that the owner of the maternal hive means to hold on to his right to the emi-

grants. David would have listened to the lecture with pity, and have retained unshaken belief in his music.

In the present case, however, the tanging was of little avail, for the swarm, after wheeling once or twice in the air, disappeared from the eyes of the constable over the rector's wall. He went on "tanging violently for a minute or two, and then paused to consider what was to be done. Should he get over the wall into the rector's garden at once, or should he go round and ask leave to carry his search into the parsonage grounds? As a man and bee-fancier he was on the point of following straight at once, over wall and fence; but the constable was also strong within him. He was not on the best of terms with old Simon, the rector's gardener, and his late opposition to Miss Winter in the matter of the singing also came into his mind. So he resolved that the parish constable would lose caste by disregarding his neighbor's boundaries, and was considering what to do next, when he heard a footstep and short cough on the other side of the wall which he recognized.

"Be you there, Maester Simon?" he called out. Where upon the walker on the other side pulled up, and after a second appeal answered shortly—

"E'es."

"Hev'ee seed ought o' my bees? Thaay've a bin' and riz, and gone off somweres athert the wall."

"E'es, I seen 'em."

"Wer' be 'em then?"

"Aal-amang wi' ourn in the limes."

"Aal-amang wi' yourn," exclaimed the constable. "Drattle 'em. Thaay be more trouble than they be wuth."

"I knowd as thaay wur yourn zoon as ever I sot eyes on 'em," old Simon went on.

"How did'ee know 'em then?" asked the constable.

"'Cause thine be aal zettin' crass-leggèd," said Simon, with a chuckle. "Thee medst cum and pick 'em all out if thee'st a mind to 't."

Simon was mollified by his own joke, and broke into a short, dry cachination, half laugh, half cough; while the constable, who was pleased and astonished to find his neighbor in such a good humor, hastened to get an empty hive and a pair of hedger's gloves—fortified with which he left his cottage and made the best of his way up street towards the Rectory gate, hard by which stood Simon's cottage.

The old gardener was of an impatient nature, and the effect of the joke had almost time to evaporate, and Simon was fast relapsing into his usual state of mind towards his neighbor before the latter made his appearance.

"Wher' hast been so long?" he exclaimed, when the constable joined him.

"I seed the young missus and t'other young lady a standin' talkin' afore the door," said David; "so I stopped back, so as not to disturve 'em."

"Be 'em gone in? Who was 'em talkin' to?"

"To thy missus, and thy daarter too, I b'lieve 'twas. Thaay be both at whoam, bean't 'em?"

"Like enough. But what was 'em zayin'?"

"I couldn't heer nothin' partic'lar, but I judged as 'twas summat about Sunday and the fire."

"'Tis na use for thaay to go on fillin' our place wi' bottles. I dwon't mean to take no mwore doctor's stuff."

Simon, it may be said, by the way, had obstinately refused to take any medicine since his fall, and had maintained a constant war on the subject, both with his own women and Miss Winter, whom he had impressed more than ever with a belief in his wrongheadedness.

"Ah! and how be'ee, tho', Maester Simon?" said David; "I didn't mind to ax afore'. You dwon't feel no wus for your fall, I hopes?"

"I feels a bit stiffish like, and as if summat wur cuttin' m' at times, when I lifts up my arms."

"'Tis a mercy 'tis no wus," said David; "we bean't so young nor lissom as we was, Maester Simon."

To which remark Simon replied by a grunt. He disliked allusions to his age—a rare dislike amongst his class in that part of the country. Most of the people are fond of making themselves out older than they are, and love to dwell on their experiences, and believe, as firmly as the rest of us, that everything has altered for the worse in the parish and district since their youth.

But Simon, though short of words and temper, and an uncomfortable acquaintance in consequence, was inclined to be helpful enough in other ways. The constable, with his assistance, had very soon hived his swarm of cross-legged bees.

Then the constable insisted on Simon's coming with him and taking a glas o ale, which, after a little coquetting, Simon consented t do So, after carrying his re-capture

safely home, and erecting the hive on a three-legged stand of his own workmanship, he hastened to rejoin Simon, and the two soon found themselves in the bar of the "Red Lion."

The constable wished to make the most of this opportunity, and so began at once to pump Simon as to his intentions with regard to his daughter. But Simon was not easy to lead in anyway whatever, and seemed in a more than usually no-business-of-yours line about his daughter. Whether he had anyone in his eye for her or not, David could not make out; but one thing he did make out, and it grieved him much. Old Simon was in a touchy and unfriendly state of mind against Harry, who, he said, was falling into bad ways, and beginning to think much too much of his self. Why was he to be wanting more allotment ground than any one else? Simon had himself given Harry some advice on the point, but not to much purpose, it would seem, as he summed up his notions on the subject by the remark that, "'Twas waste of soap to lather an ass."

The constable now and then made a stand for his young friend, but very judiciously; and, after feeling his way for some time he came to the conclusion—as, indeed, the truth was—that Simon was jealous of Harry's talent for growing flowers, and had been driven into his present frame of mind at hearing Miss Winter and her cousin talking about the flowers, at Dame Winburn's under his very nose for the last four or five days. They had spoken thus to interest the old man, meaning to praise Harry to him. The fact was, that the old gardener was one of those men who never can stand hearing other people praised, and think that all such praise must be meant in depreciation of themselves.

When they had finished their ale, the afternoon was getting on, and the constable rose to go back to his work; while old Simon declared his intention of going down to the hay-field, to see how the mowing was getting on. He was sure that the hay would never be made properly, now that he couldn't be about as much as usual.

In another hour the coat was finished, and the constable being uneasy in his mind, resolved to carry the garment home himself at once, and to have a talk with Dame Winburn. So he wrapped the coat in a handkerchief, put it under his arm, and set off down the village.

He found the dame busy with her washing; and after depositing his parcel sat down on the settle to have a talk with her. They soon got on the subject which was always uppermost in her mind, her son's prospects, and she poured out to the constable her troubles. First there was this sweet-hearting after old Simon's daughter,—not that Dame Winburn was going to say anything against her, though she might have her thoughts as well as other folk, and for her part she liked to see girls that were fit for something besides dressing themselves up like their betters,—but what worrited her was to see how Harry took it to heart. He wasn't like himself, and she couldn't see how it was all to end. It made him fractious too, and he was getting into trouble about his work. He had left his regular place, and was gone mowing with a gang, most of them men out of the parish that she knew nothing about, and likely not to be the best of company. And it was all very well in harvest time, when they could go and earn good wages at mowing and reaping anywhere about, and no man could earn better than her Harry, but when it came to winter again she didn't see but what he might find the want of a regular place, and then the farmers mightn't take him on; and his own land, that he had got, and seemed to think so much of, mightn't turn out all he thought it would. And so in fact the old lady was troubled in her mind, and only made the constable more uneasy. He had a vague sort of impression that he was in some way answerable for Harry, who was a good deal with him, and was fond of coming about his place. And although his cottage happened to be next to old Simon's, which might account for the fact to some extent, yet the constable was conscious of having talked to his young friend on many matters in a way which might have unsettled him, and encouraged his natural tendency to stand up for his own rights and independence, and he knew well enough that this temper was not the one which was likely to keep a laboring man out of trouble in the parish.

He did not allow his own misgivings, however, to add to the widow's troubles, but, on the contrary, cheered her by praising up Harry as much as even she could desire, and prophesying that all would come right, and that those that lived would see her son as respected as any man in the parish; he shouldn't be surprised, indeed, if he were churchwarden before he died. And then, astonished at his own

boldness, and feeling that he was not capable of any higher flight of imagination, the constable rose to take his leave. He asked where Harry was working, and, finding that he was at mowing in the Danes' Close, set off to look after him. The kind-hearted constable could not shake off the feeling that something was going to happen to Harry which would get him into trouble, and he wanted to assure himself that as yet nothing had gone wrong. Whenever one has this sort of vague feeling about a friend, there is a natural and irresistible impulse to go and look after him, and to be with him.

The Danes' Close was a part of the glebe, a large field of some ten acres or so in extent, close to the village. Two footpaths ran across it, so that it was almost common property, and the village children considered it as much their playground as the green itself. They trampled the grass a good deal more than seemed endurable in the eyes of Simon, who managed the rector's farming operations as well as the garden; but the children had their own way, notwithstanding the threats he sometimes launched at them. Miss Winter would have sooner lost all the hay than have narrowed their amusements. It was the most difficult piece of mowing in the parish, in consequence of the tramplings and of the large crops it bore. The Danes, or some other unknown persons, had made the land fat, perhaps with their carcases, and the benefit had lasted to the time of our story. At any rate, the field bore splendid crops, and the mowers always got an extra shilling an acre for cutting it, by Miss Winter's special order, which was paid by Simon in the most ungracious manner, and with many grumblings that it was enough to ruin all the mowers in the countryside.

As the constable got over the stile into the hay-field, a great part of his misgivings passed out of his head. He was a simple kindly man, whose heart lay open to all influences of scene and weather, and the Danes' Close, full of life and joy and merry sounds, as seen under the slanting rays of the evening sun, was just the place to rub all the wrinkles out of him.

The constable, however, is not singular in this matter.

What man amongst us all, if he will think the matter over calmly and fairly, can honestly say that there is any one spot on the earth's surface in which he has enjoyed so much real, wholesome, happy life as in a hay field? He may have won renown on horseback or on foot at the

sports and pastimes in which Englishmen glory: he may have shaken off all rivals, time after time, across the vales of Aylesbury, or of Berks, or any other of our famous hunting counties; he may have stalked the oldest and shyest buck in Scotch forests, and killed the biggest salmon of the year in the Tweed, and the trout in the Thames; he may have made topping averages in first-rate matches of cricket; or have made long and perilous marches, dear to memory, over boggy moor, or mountain, or glacier; he may have successfully attended many breakfast-parties, within drive of Mayfair, on velvet lawns, surrounded by all the fairy-land of pomp, and beauty, and luxury, which London can pour out; he may have shone at private theatricals and at-homes; his voice may have sounded over hushed audiences at St. Stephen's, or in the law courts; or he may have had good times in any other scenes of pleasure or triumph open to Englishmen; but I much doubt whether, on putting his recollections fairly and quietly together, he would not say at last that the fresh mown hay field is the place where he has spent the most hours which he would like to live over again, the fewest which he would wish to forget.

As children, we stumble about the new-mown hay, revelling in the many colors of the prostrate grass and wild flowers, and in the power of tumbling where we please without hurting ourselves; as small boys, we pelt one another and the village school girls and our nursemaids and young lady cousins with the hay, till, hot and weary, we retire to tea or syllabub beneath the shade of some great oak or elm, standing up like a monarch out of the fair pasture; or, following the mowers, we rush with eagerness on the treasures disclosed by the scythe-stroke,—the nest of the unhappy late laying titlark, or careless field-mouse; as big boys, we toil ambitiously with the spare forks and rakes, or climb into the wagons and receive with open arms the delicious load as it is pitched up from below, and rises higher and higher as we pass along the long lines of hay-cocks; a year or two later we are strolling there with our first sweethearts, our souls and tongues loaded with sweet thoughts and soft speeches; we take a turn with the scythe as the bronzed mowers lie in the shade for their short rest, and willingly pay our footing for the feat. Again, we come back with book in pocket, and our own children tumbling about as we did before them; now romping with them, and smothering them with the sweet-smel-

ling load—now musing and reading and dozing away the delicious summer evenings. And so shall we not come back to the end, enjoying as grandfathers the lovemaking and the rompings of younger generations yet?

Were any of us ever really disappointed or melancholy in a hay-field? Did we ever lie fairly back on a haycock and look up into the blue sky, and listen to the merry sounds, the whetting of scythes and the laughing prattle of women and children, and think evil thoughts of the world or our brethren? Not we! or if we have so done, we ought to be ashamed of ourselves, and deserve never to be out of town again during hay-harvest.

There is something in the sights and sounds of a hay-field which seems to touch the same chord in one as Lowell's lines in the "Lay of Sir Launfal," which end—

> "For a cap and bells our lives we pay;
> We wear out our lives with toiling and tasking;
> It it only Heaven that is given away;
> It is only God may be had for the asking.
> There is no price set on the lavish summer,
> And June may be had by the poorest comer."

But the philosophy of the hay-field remains to be written. Let us hope that whoever takes the subject in hand will not dissipate all its sweetness in the process of the inquiry wherein the charm lies.

The constable had not the slightest notion of speculating on his own sensations, but was very glad, nevertheless, to find his spirits rising as he stepped into the Danes' Close. All the hay was down, except a small piece in the further corner, which the mowers were upon. There were groups of children in many parts of the field, and women to look after them, mostly sitting on the fresh swarth, working and gossiping, while the little ones played about. He had not gone twenty yards before he was stopped by the violent crying of a child; and, turning toward the voice, he saw a little girl of six or seven, who had strayed from her mother, scrambling out of the ditch, and wringing her hands in an agony of pain and terror. The poor little thing had fallen into a bed of nettles, and was very much frightened, and not a little hurt. The constable caught her up in his arms, soothing her as well as he could, and hurrying along till he found some dock-leaves, sat down with

her on his knee, and rubbed her hands with the leaves, repeating the old saw—

"Our nettle,
In dock:
Dock shall ha'
A new smock;
Nettle shan't
Ha' narrun'."

What with the rubbing, and the constable's kind manner, and listening to the doggrel rhyme, and feeling that nettle would get her deserts, the little thing soon ceased crying. But several groups had been drawn towards the place, and amongst the rest came Miss Winter and her cousin, who had been within hearing of the disaster. The constable began to feel very nervous and uncomfortable, when he looked up from his charitable occupation, and suddenly found the rector's daughter close to him. But his nervousness was uncalled for. The sight of what he was about, and of the tender way in which he was handling the child, drove all remembrance of his heresies and contumaciousness in the matter of psalmody out of her head. She greeted him with frankness and cordiality, and presently—when he had given up his charge to the mother, who was inclined at first to be hard with the poor little sobbing truant—came up, and said she wished to speak a few words to him.

David was highly delighted at Miss Winter's manner; but he walked along at her side not quite comfortable in his mind, for fear lest she should start the old subject of dispute, and then his duty as a public man would have to be done at all risk of offending her. He was much comforted when she began by asking him whether he had seen much of Widow Winburn's son lately.

David admitted that he generally saw him every day.

Did he know that he had left his place, and had quarrelled with Mr. Tester?

Yes, David knew that Harry had had words with Farmer Tester; but Farmer Tester was a sort that was very hard not to have words with.

"Still, it is very bad, you know, for so young a man to be quarrelling with the farmers," said Miss Winter.

"'Twas the varmer as quarreled wi' he, you see, miss," David answered, "which makes all the odds. He cum to Harry all in a fluster, and said as how he must drow up the land as he'd a'got, or he's place—one or t'other on 'em.

And so you see, Miss, as Harry wur kind o' druv to it. 'Twarn't likely as he wur to drow up the land now as he were just reppin' the benefit ov it, and all for Varmer Tester's place, wich be no sich gurt things, miss, arter all."

"Very likely not; but I fear it may hinder his getting employment. The other farmers will not take him on now if they can help it."

"No; thaay falls out wi' one another bad enough, and calls all manner o' names. But thaay can't abide a poor man to speak his mind, nor take his own part, not one on 'em," said David, looking at Miss Winter, as if doubtful how she might take his strictures; but she went on without any show of dissent,—

"I shall try to get him work for my father, but I am sorry to find that Simon does not seem to like the idea of taking him on. It is not easy always to make out Simon's meaning. When I spoke to him, he said something about a bleating sheep losing a bite; but I should think this young man is not much of a talker in general?"——she paused.

"That's true, miss," said David, energetically; "there ain't a quieter spoken or steadier man at his work in the parish."

"I'm very glad to hear you say so," said Miss Winter, "and I hope we may soon do something for him. But what I want you to do just now is to speak a word to him about the company he seems to be getting into."

The constable looked somewhat aghast at this speech of Miss Winter's, but did not answer, not knowing to what she was alluding. She saw that he did not understand, and went on—

"He is mowing to-day with a gang from the heath and the next parish; I am sure they are very bad men for him to be with. I was so vexed when I found Simon had given them the job; but he said they would get it all down in a day, and be done with it, and that was all he cared for."

"And 'tis a fine day's work, miss, for five men," said David, looking over the field; "and 'tis good work too, you mind the swarth else," and he picked up a handful of the fallen grass to show her how near the ground it was cut.

"Oh, yes, I have no doubt they are very good mowers, but they are not good men, I'm sure. There, do you see now who it is that is bringing them beer? I hope you will see Widow Winburn's son, and speak to him, and try to

keep him out of bad company. We should be all so sorry if he were to get into trouble."

David promised to do his best, and Miss Winter wished him good evening, and rejoined her cousin?"

"Well, Katie, will he do your behest?"

"Yes, indeed; and I think he is the best person to do it. Widow Winburn thinks her son minds him more than any one."

"Do you know, I don't think it will ever go right. I'm sure she doesn't care the least for him."

"Oh, you have only just seen her once for two or three minutes."

"And then that wretched old Simon is so perverse about it," said the cousin. "You will never manage him."

"He is very provoking, certainly; but I get my own way generally, in spite of him. And it is such a perfect plan, isn't it!"

"Oh, charming! if you can only bring it about."

"Now we must be really going home, papa will be getting restless." So the young ladies left the hay-field deep in castle-building for Harry Winburn and the gardener's daughter, Miss Winter being no more able to resist a tale of true love than her cousin, or the rest of her sex. They would have been more or less than woman if they had not taken an interest in so absorbing a passion as poor Harry's. By the time they reached the Rectory gate they had installed him in the gardener's cottage with his bride and mother (for there would be plenty of room for the widow, and it would be so convenient to have the laundry close at hand), and had pentioned old Simon, and sent him and his old wife to wrangle away the rest of their time in the widow's cottage. Castle-building is a delightful and harmless exercise.

Meantime David the constable had gone towards the mowers, who were taking a short rest before finishing off the last half-acre which remained stadinng. The person whose appearance had so horrified Miss Winter was drawing beer for them from a small barrel. This was an elderly raw-boned woman with a skin burnt as brown as that of any of the mowers. She wore a man's hat and spencer, and had a strong harsh voice, and altogether was not a prepossessing person. She went by the name of Daddy Cowell in the parish, and had been for years a proscribed person. She lived up on the heath, often worked in the fields, took

in lodgers, and smoked a short clay pipe. These eccentricities, when added to her half-made clothing, were quite enough to account for the sort of outlawry in which she lived. Miss Winter, and other good people of Englebourn, believed her capable of any crime, and the children were taught to stop talking and playing, and run away when she came near them; but the constable, who had had one or two search-warrants to execute in her house, and had otherwise had frequent occasions of getting acquainted with her in the course of his duties, had by no means so evil an opinion of her. He had never seen much harm in her, he had often been heard to say, and she never made pretence to much good. Nevertheless, David was by no means pleased to see her acting as purveyor to the gang which Harry had joined. He knew how such contact would damage him in the eyes of all the parochial respectabilities, and was anxious to do his best to get him clear of it.

With these views he went up to the men, who were resting under a large elm tree, and complimented them on their day's work. They were themselves well satisfied with it, and with one another. When men have had sixteen hours' or so hard mowing in company, and none of them can say that the others have not done their fair share, they are apt to respect one another more at the end of it. It was Harry's first day with this gang, who were famous for going about the neighborhood, and doing great feats in hay and wheat harvest. They were satisfied with him and he with them, none the less so probably in his present frame of mind, because they also were loose on the world, servants of no regular master. It was a bad time to make his approaches, the constable saw; so, after sitting by Harry, until the gang rose to finish off their work in the cool of the evening, and asking him to come round by his cottage on his way home, which Harry promised to do he walked back to the village.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE SCHOOLS.

THERE is no more characteristic spot in Oxford than the quadrangle of the schools. Doubtless in the times when the University held and exercised the privileges of infang-

thief and outfang-thief, and other such old-world rights there must have been a place somewhere within the liberties devoted to examinations even more exciting than the great-go. But since *alma mater* has ceased to take cognizance of "treasons, insurrections, felonies, and mayhem," it is here, in that fateful and inexorable quadrangle, and the buildings which surround it, that she exercises her most potent spells over the spirits of her children. I suppose that a man being tried for his life must be more uncomfortable than an undergraduate being examined for his degree; and that to be hung—perhaps even to be pilloried—must be worse than to be plucked. But after all, the feeling in both cases must be essentially the same, only more intense in the former; and an institution which can examine a man (in literis humanioribus, in *humanities* so called) once a year for two or three days at a time, has nothing to complain of though it has no longer the power of hanging him at once out of hand.

The schools' quadrangle is for the most part a lonely place. Men pass through the melancholy iron-gates by which that quadrangle is entered on three sides—from Broad street, from the Ratcliff, and from New College-lane—when necessity leads them that way, with alert step and silently. No nursemaids or children play about it. Nobody lives in it. Only when the examinations are going on you may see a few hooded figures who walk as though conscious of the powers of academic life and death which they wield, and a good deal of shuddering undergraduate life flitting about the place—luckless youths, in white ties and bands, who are undergoing the *peine forte et dure* with different degrees of composure; and their friends who are there to look after them. You may go in and watch the torture yourself if you are so minded, for the *vivâ voce* schools are open to the public. But one such experiment will be enough for you unless you are very hard-hearted. The sight of the long table, behind which sit Minos, Rhadamanthes and Co. fully robed, stern of face, soft of speech, seizing their victim in turn, now letting him run a little way as a cat does a mouse, then drawing him back, with claw of wily question, prodding him on this side and that, turning him inside out—the row of victims opposite, pale or flushed, of anxious or careless mein, according to temperament, but one and all on the rack as they bend over the allotted paper, or read from the well-thumbed book—the scarcely-less-to-be-pitied row be-

ind of future victims, "sitting for the schools" as it is called
ıthlessly brought hither by statutes, to watch the sufferings
ıey must hereafter undergo—should fill the friend of suffer-
ıg humanity with thoughts too deep for tears. Through
ıe long day till four o'clock, or later, the torture lasts.
'hen the last victim is dismissed; the men who are "sitting
or the schools" fly all ways to their colleges, silently, in
earch of relief to their over-wrought feelings—probably
so of beer, the undergraduate's universal specific. The
eadles close those ruthless doors for a mysterious half-hour
ı the examiners. Outside in the quadrangle collect by
vos and threes the friends of the victims, waiting for the
·opening of the door, and the distribution of the "testa-
urs." The testamurs, lady readers will be pleased to un-
erstand, are certificates under the hands of the examiners
ıat your sons, brothers, husbands, perhaps, have success-
lly undergone the torture. But, if husbands, oh, go not
ourselves, and send not your sons to wait for the testamur
the head of your house; for Oxford has seldom seen a
ght over which she would more willingly draw the veil
ith averted face than that of the youth rushing wildly,
ssolved in tears, from the schools' quadrangle, and shout-
g "Mamma! papa's plucked! papa's plucked!"

The examination is nearly over which is to decide the
ademical fate of some of our characters; the paper-work
the candidates for honors has been going on for the last
eek. Every morning our three St. Ambrose acquaint-
ıces have mustered with the rest for the anxious day's
ork, after such breakfasts as they have been able to eat
ıder the circumstances. They take their work in very
fferent ways. Grey rushes nervously back to his rooms
henever he is out of the schools for ten minutes, to look
dates and dodges. He worries himself sadly over every
under which he discovers himself to have made, and sits
nearly all night cramming, always hoping for a better
-morrow. Blake keeps up his affected carelessness to the
st, quizzing the examiners, laughing over the shots he has
en making in the last paper. His shots, it must be said,
rn out well for the most part; in the taste paper particu-
ly, as they compare notes, he seems to have almost struck
e bull's-eye in his answers to one or two questions which
ardy and Grey have passed over altogether. When he
wide of the mark he passes it off with some jesting re-
ark "that a fool can ask in five minutes more questions

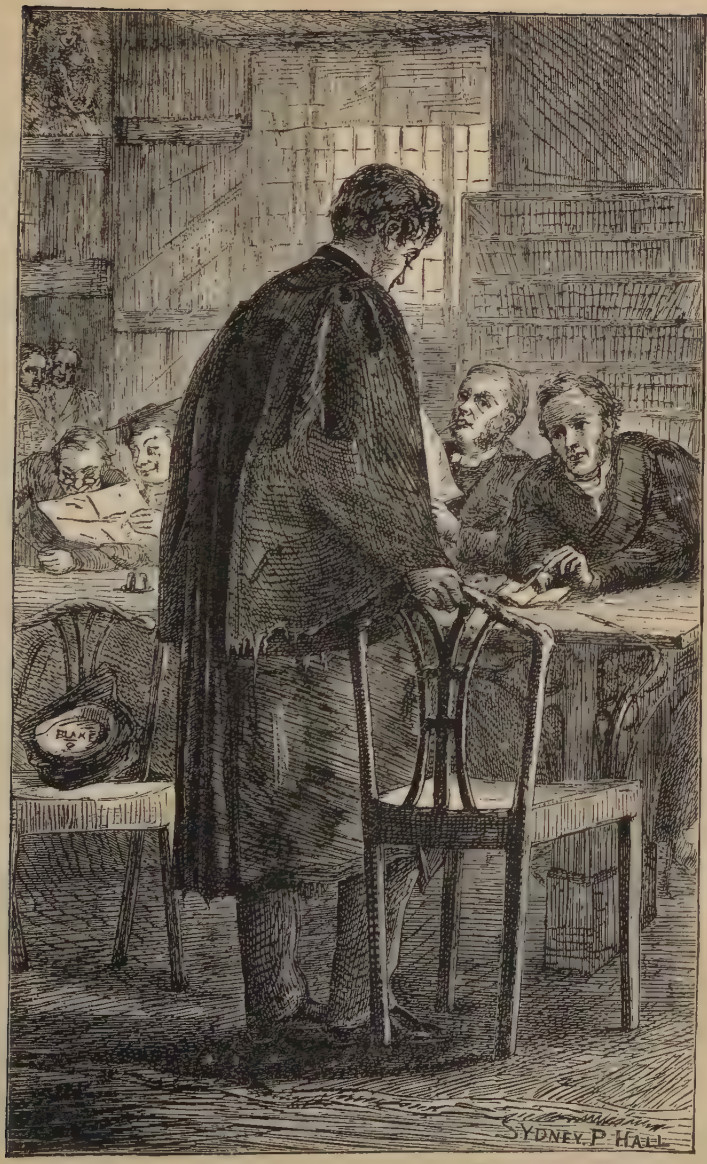
than a wise man can answer in a week," or wish "that the examiners would play fair, and change sides of the table for an hour with the candidates for a finish." But he, too, though he does it on the sly, is cramming with his coach at every available spare moment. Hardy had finished his reading a full thirty-six hours before the first day of paper-work, and had braced himself for the actual struggle by two good nights' rest and a long day on the river with Tom. He had worked hard from the first, and so had really mastered his books. And now, feeling that he had fairly and honestly done his best, and that if he fails it will be either from bad luck or natural incapacity, and not from his own fault, he manages to keep a cooler head than any of his companions in trouble.

The week's paper work passed off uneventfully; then comes the *vivâ voce* work for the candidates for honors. They go in, in alphabetical order, four a day, for one more day's work, the hardest of all, and then there is nothing more to do but wait patiently for the class list. On these days there is a good attendance in the enclosed space to which the public are admitted. The front seats are often occupied by the private tutors of the candidates, who are there, like Newmarket trainers, to see the performance of their stables, marking how each colt bears pressing, and comports himself when the pinch comes. They watch the examiners, too, carefully to see what line they take, whether science or history, or scholarship is likely to tell most, that they may handle the rest of their starts accordingly. Behind them, for the most part on the hindermost benches of the flight of raised steps, anxious younger brothers and friends sit, for a few minutes at a time, flitting in and out in much unrest, and making the objects of their solicitude more nervous than ever by their sympathy.

It is now the afternoon of the second day of the *vivâ voce* examinations in honors. Blake is one of the men in. His tutor, Hardy, Grey, Tom, and other St. Ambrose men have all been in the schools more or less during his examination, and now Hardy and Tom are waiting outside the doors for the issuing of the testamurs.

The group is small enough. It is so much of course that a class-man should get his testamur that there is no excitement about it; generally the man himself stops to receive it.

The only anxious faces in the group are Tom's and Har



"Viva Voce." *In the "Schools."*

dy's. They have not exchanged a word for the last few minutes in their short walk before the door. Now the examiners come out and walk away towards their colleges, and the next minute the door again opens and the clerk of the schools appears with a slip of paper in his hand.

"Now you'll see if I am not right," said Hardy, as they gathered to the door with the rest. "I tell you there isn't the least chance for him."

The clerk read out the names inscribed on the testamurs which he held, and handed them to the owners.

"Haven't you one for Mr. Blake of St. Ambrose?" said Tom, desperately, as the clerk was closing the door.

"No, sir; none but those I have just given out," answered the clerk, shaking his head. The door closed, and they turned away in silence for the first minute.

"I told you how it would be," said Hardy, as they passed out of the south gate into the Ratcliff Quadrangle.

"But he seemed to be doing so well when I was in."

"You were not there at the time. I thought at first they would have sent him out of the schools at once."

"In his divinity, wasn't it?"

"Yes; he was asked to repeat one of the Articles, and didn't know three words of it. From that moment I saw it was all over. The examiner and he both lost their tempers, and it went from bad to worse, till the examiner remarked that he could have answered one of the questions he was asking when he was ten years old, and Blake replied, so could he. They gave him a paper in divinity afterwards, but you could see there was no chance for him."

"Poor fellow! what will he do, do you think? How will he take it?"

"I can' tell. But I'm afraid it will be a very serious matter for him. He was the ablest man in our year too. What a pity."

They got into St. Ambrose just as the bell for afsernoon chapel was going down, and went in. Blake was there, and one look showed him what had happened. In fact he had expected nothing else all day since his breakdown in the Articles. Tom couldn't help watching him during chapel; and afterwards, on that evening, acknowledged to a friend that whatever else you might think of Blake, there was no doubt about his gameness.

After chapel he loitered outside the door in the quadrangle, talking just as usual, and before hall he loitered on

the steps in well-feigned carelessness. Everybody else was thinking of his breakdown; some with real sorrow and sympathy; others as of any other nine days' wonder—pretty much as if the favorite for the Derby had broken down; others with ill-concealed triumph, for Blake had many enemies amongst the men. He himself was conscious enough of what they were thinking, but maintained his easy, gay manner through it all, though the effort it cost him was tremendous. The only allusion he made to what had happened which Tom heard was when he asked him to wine.

"Are you engaged to night, Brown?" he said. Tom answered in the negative. "Come to me, then," he went on. "You won't get another chance in St. Ambrose. I have a few bottles of old wine left; we may as well floor them; they won't bear moving to a hall with their master."

And then he turned to some other men and asked them, every one in fact who he came across, especially the dominant fast set with whom he had chiefly lived. These young gentlemen (of whom we had a glimpse at the outset, but whose company we have carefully avoided ever since, seeing that their sayings and doings were of a kind of which the less said the better) had been steadily going on in their way, getting more and more idle, reckless and insolent. Their doings had been already so scandalous on several occasions as to call for solemn meetings of the college authorities; but, no vigorous measures having followed, such deliberations had only made matters worse, and given the men a notion that they could do what they pleased with impunity. This night the climax had come; it was as though the flood of misrule had at last broken banks and overflowed the whole college.

For two hours the wine party in Blake's large ground-floor rooms was kept up with a wild, reckless mirth, in keeping with the host's temper. Blake was on his mettle. He had asked every man with whom he had a speaking acquaintance, as if he wished to face out his disaster at once to the whole world. Many of the men came feeling uncomfortable, and would sooner have stayed away and treated the pluck as real misfortune. But after all Blake was the best judge of how he liked to be treated, and, if he had a fancy for giving a great wine on the occasion, the civilest thing to do was to get to it. And so they went, and wondered as much as he could desire at the brilliant coolness of

their host, speculating and doubting nevertheless in their own secret hearts whether it wasn't acting after all. Acting it was, no doubt, and not worth the doing; no acting is. But one must make allowances. No two men take a thing just alike, and very few can sit down quietly when they have lost a fall in life's wrestle, and say: "Well, here I am, beaten no doubt this time. But my own fault, too. Now, take a good look at me, my good friends, as I know you all want to do, and say your say out, for I mean getting up again directly and having another turn at it."

Blake drank freely himself, and urged his guests to drink, which was a superfluous courtesy for the most part. Many of the men left his room considerably excited. They had dispersed for an hour or so to billiards, or a stroll in the town, and at ten o'clock reassembled at supper parties, of which there were several in college this evening, especially a monster one at Chanter's rooms—a "champagne supper," as he had carefully and ostentatiously announced on the cards of invitation.

This flaunting the champagne in their faces had been resented by Drysdale and others, who drank his champagne in tumblers, and then abused it and clamored for beer in the middle of the supper. Chanter, whose prodigality in some ways was only exceeded by his general meanness, had lost his temper at this demand, and insisted that, if they wanted beer, they might send for it themselves, for he wouldn't pay for it. This protest was treated with uproarous contempt, and gallons of ale soon made their appearance in college jugs and tankards. The tables were cleared, and songs (most of them of more than doubtful character), cigars, and all sorts of compounded drinks, from claret cup to egg flip, succeeded. The company, recruited constantly as men came into the college, was getting more and more excited every minute. The scouts cleared away and carried off the relics of the supper, and then left; still the revel went on, till, by midnight, the men were ripe for any mischief or folly which those among them who retained any brains at all could suggest. The signal for breaking up was given by the host's falling from his seat.

Some of the men rose with a shout to put him to bed, which they accomplished with difficulty, after dropping him several times, and left him to snore off the effects of his debauch with one of his boots on. Others took to doing what mischief occurred to them in his rooms. One man

mounted on a chair with a cigar in his mouth which had gone out, was employed in pouring the contents of a champagne bottle with unsteady hand into the clock on the mantel-piece. Chanter was a particular man in this sort of furniture, and his clock was rather a specialty. It was a large bronze figure of Atlas, supporting the globe in the shape of a time-piece. Unluckily, the maker, not anticipating the sort of test to which his work would be subjected, had ingeniously left the hole for winding up in the top of the clock, so that unusual facilities existed for drowning the world-carrier, and he was already almost at his last tick. One or two men were morally aiding and abetting, and physically supporting the experimenter on clocks, who found it difficult to stand to his work by himself. Another knot of young gentlemen stuck to the tables, and so continued to shout out scraps of song, sometimes standing on their chairs, and sometimes tumbling off them. Another set were employed on the amiable work of pouring beer and sugar into three new pairs of polished leather dress boots, with colored tops to them, which they discovered in the dressing-room. Certainly, as they remarked, Chanter could have no possible use for so many dress boots at once, and it was a pity the beer should be wasted; but on the whole, perhaps, the materials were never meant for combination, and had better have been kept apart. Others had gone away to break into the kitchen, headed by one who had just come into college and vowed he would have some supper; and others, to screw up an unpopular tutor, or to break into the rooms of some inoffensive freshman. The remainder mustered on the grass in the quadrangle, and began playing leap-frog and larking one another. Amongst these last was our hero, who had been at Blake's wine and one of the quieter supper parties; and, though not so far gone as most of his companions, was by no means in a state in which he would have cared to meet the Dean. He lent his hearty aid accordingly to swell the noise and tumult, which was becoming something out of the way even for St. Ambrose's. As the leap-frog was flagging, Drysdale suddenly appeared carrying some silver plates which were used on solemn occasions in the common room, and allowed to be issued on special application for gentlemen-commoners' parties. A rush was made towards him.

"Halloa, here's Drysdale with lots of swag," shouted one.

"What are you going to do with it?" cried another. Drysdale paused a moment with the peculiarly sapient look of a tipsy man who has suddenly lost the thread of his ideas, and then suddenly broke out with—

"Hang it! I forgot. But let's play at quoits with them."

The proposal was received with applause, and the game began, but Drysdale soon left it. He had evidently some notion in his head which would not suffer him to turn to anything else till he had carried it out. He went off accordingly to Chanter's rooms, while the quoits went on in the front quadrangle.

About this time, however, the Dean and bursar, and the tutors who lived in college, began to be conscious that something unusual was going on. They were quite used to distant choruses, and great noises in the men's rooms, and to a fair amount of shouting and skylarking in the quadrangle, and were long-suffering men, not given to interfering; but there must be an end to all endurance, and the state of things which had arrived could no longer be met by a turn in bed and a growl at the uproars and follies of undergraduates.

Presently some of the rioters on the grass caught sight of a figure gliding along the side quadrangle towards the Dean's staircase. A shout arose that the enemy was up, but little heed was paid to it by the greater number. Then another figure passed from the Dean's staircase to the porter's lodge. Those of the men who had any sense left saw that it was time to quit, and, after warning the rest, went off towards their rooms. Tom on his way to his staircase caught sight of a figure seated in a remote corner of the inner quadrangle, and made for it, impelled by natural curiosity. He found Drysdale seated on the ground with several silver tankards by his side, employed to the best of his powers in digging a hole with one of the college carving-knives.

"Halloa, Drysdale! what are you up to?" he shouted, laying his hand on his shoulder.

"Providing for poshterity," replied Drysdale, gravely, without looking up.

"What the deuce do you mean? Don't be such an ass. The Dean will be out in a minute. Get up and come along."

"I tell you, old fellow," said Drysdale, somewhat inarticulately, and driving his knife into the ground again, "the

dons are going to spout the college plate. So I am burying these articles for poshterity—"

"Hang posterity," said Tom; "come along directly, or you'll be caught and rusticated."

"Go to bed, Brown—you're drunk, Brown," replied Drysdale, continuing his work, and striking the carving-knife into the ground so close to his own thigh that it made Tom shudder.

"Here they are then," he cried the next moment, seizing Drysdale by the arm, as a rush of men came through the passage into the quadrangle, shouting and tumbling along, and making in small groups for the different stair-cases. The Dean and two of the tutors followed, and the porter bearing a lantern. There was no time to be lost; so Tom, after one more struggle to pull Drysdale up and hurry him off, gave it up, and leaving him to his fate, ran across to his own staircase.

For the next half-hour the Dean and his party patrolled the college, and succeeded at the last in restoring order, though not without some undignified and disagreeable passages. The lights on the staircases, which generally burnt all night, were of course put out as they approached. On the first staircase which they stormed, the porter's lantern was knocked out of his hand by an unseen adversary, and the light put out on the bottom stairs. On the first landing the bursar trod on a small terrier belonging to a fast freshman, and the dog naturally thereupon bit the bursar's leg; while his master and other *enfants perdus*, taking advantage of the diversion, rushed down the dark stairs, past the party of order, and into the quadrangle, where they scattered amidst a shout of laughter. While the porter was gone for a light, the Dean and his party rashly ventured on a second ascent. Here an unexpected catastrophy awaited them. On the top landing lived one of the steadiest men in college, whose door had been tried shortly before. He had been roused out of his first sleep, and, vowing vengeance on the next comers, stood behind his oak, holding his brown George, or huge earthenware receptacle, half full of dirty water, in which his bed-maker had been washing up his tea-things. Hearing stealthy steps and whisperings on the stairs below, he suddenly threw open his oak, discharging the whole contents of his brown George on the approaching authorities, with a shout of, "Take that for your skulking."

The exasperated Dean and tutors rushing on, seized their astonished and innocent assailant, and after receiving explanations, and the offer of clean towels, hurried off again after the real enemy. And now the porter appeared again with a light, and, continuing their rounds, they apprehended and disarmed Drysdale, collected the college plate, marked down others of the rioters, visited Chanter's rooms, held a parley with the one of their number who was screwed up in his rooms, and discovered that the bars had been wrenched out of the kitchen window. After which they retired to sleep on their indignation, and quiet settled down again on the ancient and venerable college.

The next morning at chapel many of the revellers met; in fact, there was a fuller attendance than usual, for every one felt that something serious must be impending. After such a night the dons must make a stand, or give up altogether. The most reckless only of the fast set were absent. St. Cloud was there, dressed even more precisely than usual, and looking as if he were in the habit of going to bed at ten, and had never heard of milk punch. Tom turned out not much the worse himself, but in his heart feeling not a little ashamed of the whole business; of the party, the men, but, above all, of himself. He thrust the shame back, however, as well as he could, and put a cool face on it. Probably most of the men were in much the same state of mind. Even in St. Ambrose's reckless and vicious as the college had become, by far the greater part of the undergraduates would gladly have seen a change in the direction of order and decency, and were sick of the wretched licence of doing right in their own eyes and wrong in every other person's.

As the men trooped out of chapel, they formed in corners of the quadrangle, except the reading set, who went off quietly to their rooms. There was a pause of a minute or two. Neither principal, dean, tutor, nor fellow followed as on ordinary occasions. "They're hatching something in the outer chapel," said one.

"It'll be a coarse time for Chanter, I take it," said another.

"Was your name sent to the buttery for his supper?"

"No, I took d—d good care of that," said St. Cloud, who was addressed.

"Drysdale was caught, wasn't he?"

"So I hear, and nearly frightened the Dean and the

porter out of their wits by staggering after them with a carving-knife."

"He'll be sacked, of course."

"Much he'll care for that."

"Here they come, then; by Jove, how black they look!"

The authorities now came out of the antechapel door, and walked slowly across towards the Principal's house in a body. At this moment, as ill-luck would have it, Jack trotted into the front quadrangle, dragging after him the light steel chain with which he was usually fastened up in Drysdale's scout's room at night. He came innocently towards one and another of the groups, and retired from each much astonished at the low growl with which his acquaintance was repudiated on all sides.

"Porter, whose dog is that?" said the Dean catching sight of him.

"Mr. Drysdale's dog, sir, I think, sir," answered the porter.

"Probably the animal who bit me last night," said the bursar. His knowledge of dogs was small; if Jack had fastened on him he would probably have been in bed from the effects.

"Turn the dog out of college," said the Dean.

"Please, sir, he's a very savage dog, sir," said the porter, whose respect for Jack was unbounded.

"Turn him out immediately," replied the Dean.

The wretched porter, arming himself with a broom, approached Jack, and after some coaxing managed to catch hold of the end of his chain, and began to lead him towards the gates, carefully holding out the broom towards Jack's nose with his other hand to protect himself. Jack at first hauled away at his chain, and then began circling round the porter at the full extent of it, evidently meditating an attack. Notwithstanding the seriousness of the situation the ludicrous alarm of the porter set the men laughing.

"Come along, or Jack will be pinning the wretched Copas," said Jervis; and he and Tom stepped up to the terrified little man, and, releasing him, led Jack, who knew them both well, out of college.

"Were you at that supper party?" said Jervis, as they deposited Jack with an ostler, who was lounging outside the gates, to be taken to Drysdale's stables.

"No," said Tom,

"I'm glad to hear it; there will be a pretty clean sweep after last night's doings."

"But I was in the quadrangle when they came out."

"Not caught, eh?" said Jervis.

"No, luckily, I got to my own rooms at once."

"Were any of the crew caught?"

"Not that I know of."

"Well, we shall hear enough of it before lecture time."

"Jervis was right. There was a meeting in the common room directly after breakfast. Drysdale, anticipating his fate, took his name off before they sent for him. Chanter and three or four others were rusticated for a year, and Blake was ordered to go down at once. He was a scholar, and what was to be done in his case would be settled at the meeting at the end of the term.

For twenty-four hours it was supposed that St. Cloud had escaped altogether; but at the end of that time he was summoned before a meeting in the common room. The tutor whose door had been so effectually screwed up that he had been obliged to get out of his window by a ladder to attend morning chapel, proved wholly unable to appreciate the joke, and set himself to work to discover the perpetrators of it. The door was fastened with long gimlets, which had been screwed firmly in, and when driven well home, their heads knocked off. The tutor collected the shafts of the gimlets from the carpenter, who came to effect an entry for him; and, after careful examination discovered the trade mark. So, putting them into his pocket, he walked off into the town, and soon came back with the information he required, which resulted in the rustication of St. Cloud, an event which was borne by the college with the greatest equanimity.

Shortly afterwards Tom attended in the schools' quadrangle again, to be present at the posting of the class list. This time there were plenty of anxious faces; the quadrangle was full of them. He felt almost as nervous himself as if he were waiting for the third gun. He thrust himself forward, and was amongst the first who caught sight of the document. One look was enough for him, and the next moment he was off at full speed for St. Ambrose, and, rushing headlong into Hardy's rooms, seized him by the hand and shook it vehemently.

"It's all right, old fellow," he cried, as soon as he could

catch his breath; "it's all right. Four firsts; you're one of them; well done!"

"And Grey, where's he; is he all right?"

"Bless me, I forgot to look," said Tom; "I only read the firsts, and then came off as hard as I could."

"Then he is not a first."

"No; I'm sure of that."

"I must go and see him; he deserved it far more than I."

"No, by Jove, old boy," said Tom, seizing him again by the hand, "that he didn't; nor any man that ever went into the schools."

"Thank you, Brown," said Hardy, returning his warm grip. "You do one good. Now to see poor Grey, and to write to my dear old father before hall. Fancy him opening the letter at breakfast the day after to-morrow! I only hope it won't hurt him."

"Never fear. I don't believe in people dying of joy, and anything short of sudden death he won't mind at the price."

Hardy hurried off, and Tom went to his own rooms, and smoked a cigar to allay his excitement, and thought about his friend, and all they had felt together, and laughed and mourned over in the short months of their friendship. A pleasant, dreamy half-hour he spent thus, till the hall bell roused him, and he made his toilette and went to his dinner.

It was with very mixed feelings that Hardy walked by the servitor's table and took his seat with the bachelors, an equal at last amongst equals. No man who is worth his salt can leave a place where he has gone through hard and searching discipline, and been tried in the very depths of his heart, without regret, however much he may have winced under the discipline. It is no light thing to fold up and lay by forever a portion of one's life, even when it can be laid by with honor and in thankfulness.

But it was with no mixed feelings, but with a sense of entire triumph and joy, that Tom watched his friend taking his new place, and the dons one after another coming up and congratulating him, and treating him as the man who had done honor to them and his college.

CHAPTER XXV.

COMMEMORATION.

THE end of the academic year was now at hand, and Oxford was beginning to put on her gayest clothing. The college gardeners were in a state of unusual activity, and the lawns and flower-beds, which form such exquisite settings to many of the venerable grey, gabled buildings, were as neat and as bright as hands could make them. Cooks, butlers, and their assistants were bestirring themselves in kitchen and buttery, under the direction of bursars jealous of the fame of their houses, in the preparation of the abundant and solid fare with which Oxford is wont to entertain all comers. Everything the best of its kind, no stint but no nonsense, seems to be the wise rule which the University hands down and lives up to in these matters. However we may differ as to her degeneracy in other departments, all who have ever visited her will admit that in this of hospitality she is still a great national teacher, acknowledging and preaching by example the fact, that eating and drinking are important parts of man's life, which are to be allowed their due prominence, and not thrust into a corner, but are to be done soberly and thankfully, in the sight of God and man. The coaches were bringing in heavy loads of visitors; carriages of all kinds were coming in from the neighboring counties; and lodgings in the High-street were going up to fabulous prices.

In one of these High-street lodgings, on the evening of the Saturday before Commemoration, Miss Winter and her cousin are sitting. They have been in Oxford during the greater part of the day, having posted up from Englebourn; but they have only just come in, for the younger lady is still in her bonnet, and Miss Winter's lies on the table. The windows are wide open, and Miss Winter is sitting at one of them; while her cousin is busied in examining the furniture and decorations of their temporary home, now commenting upon these, now pouring out praises of Oxford.

"Isn't it too charming? I never dreamt that any town could be so beautiful. Don't you feel wild about it, Katie?"

"It is the queen of towns, dear. But I know it well, you see, so that I can't be quite so enthusiastic as you."

"Oh, those dear gardens! what was the name of those ones with the targets up, where they were shooting? Don't you remember?"

"New College Gardens, on the old city wall, you mean?"

"No, no. They were nice and sentimental. I should like to go and sit and read poetry there. But I mean the big ones, the gorgeous, princely ones, with wicked old Bishop Laud's gallery looking into them."

"Oh! St. John's, of course."

"Yes, St. John's. Why do you hate Laud so, Katie?"

"I don't hate him, dear. He was a Berkshire man, you know. But I think he did a great deal of harm to the Church."

"How did you think my new silk looked in the garden? How lucky I brought it, wasn't it? I shouldn't have liked to have been in nothing but muslin. They don't suit here; you want something richer amongst the old buildings, and on the beautiful velvety turf of the gardens. How do you think I looked?"

"You looked like a queen, dear; or a lady-in-waiting, at least."

"Yes, a lady-in-waiting on Henrietta Maria. Didn't you hear one of the gentlemen say that she was lodged in St. John's when Charles marched to relieve Gloucester? Ah! can't you fancy her sweeping about the gardens, with her ladies following her, and Bishop Laud walking just a little behind her, and talking in a low voice about—let me see—something very important?"

"Oh, Mary, where has your history gone? He was Archbishop, and was safely locked up in the Tower."

"Well, perhaps he was; then he couldn't be with her, of course. How stupid of you to remember, Katie. Why can't you make up your mind to enjoy yourself when you come out for a holiday?"

"I shouldn't enjoy myself any the more for forgetting dates," said Katie, laughing.

"Oh, you would though; only try. But let me see, it can't be Laud. Then it shall be that cruel drinking old man, with the wooden leg made of gold, who was governor of Oxford when the king was away. He must be hobbling along after the queen in a buff coat and breast

plate, holding his hat with a long drooping white feather in his hand."

"But you wouldn't like it at all, Mary; it would be too serious for you. The poor queen would be too anxious for gossip, and you ladies-in-waiting would be obliged to walk after her without saying a word."

"Yes, that would be stupid. But then she would have to go away with the old governor to write dispatches; and some of the young officers with long hair and beautiful lace sleeves, and large boots, whom the king had left behind, wounded, might come and walk perhaps, or sit in the sun in the quiet gardens."

Mary looked over her shoulder with the merriest twinkle in her eye, to see how her steady cousin would take this last picture. "The college authorities would never allow that," she said quietly, still looking out the window; "if you wanted beaus, you must have had them in black gowns."

"They would have been jealous of the soldiers, you think? Well, I don't mind; the black gowns are very pleasant, only a little stiff. But how do you think my bonnet looked.

"Charmingly, But when are you going to have done looking in the glass? You don't care for the buildings, I believe, a bit. Come and look at St. Mary's; there is such a lovely light on the steeple!"

"I'll come directly, but I must get these flowers right. I'm sure there are too many in this trimming."

Mary was trying her new bonnet on over and over again before the mantel-glass, and pulling out and changing the places of the blush-rose buds with which it was trimmed. Just then a noise of wheels, accompanied by a merry tune on a cornopean, came in from the street.

"What's that, Katie?" she cried, stopping her work for a moment.

"A coach coming up from Magdalen Bridge. I think it is a cricketing party coming home."

"Oh, let me see," and she tripped across to the window, bonnet in hand, and stood beside her cousin. And, then, sure enough, a coach covered with cricketers returning from a match drove past the window. The young ladies looked out at first with great curiosity; but, suddenly finding themselves the mark for a whole coach load of male eyes, shrank back a little before the cricketers had passed on

towards the "Mitre." As the coach passed out of sight, Mary gave a pretty toss of her head, and said—

"Well, they don't want for assurance, at any rate. I think they needn't have stared so."

"It was our fault," said Katie; "we shouldn't have been at the window. Besides, you know you are to be a lady-in-waiting on Henrietta Maria up here, and of course you must get used to being stared at."

"Oh yes, but that was to be by young gentlemen wounded in the wars, in lace ruffles, as one sees them in pictures. That's a very different thing from young gentlemen in flannel trousers and straw hats, driving up the High street on coaches. I declare one of them had the impudence to bow as if he knew you."

"So he does. That was my cousin."

"Your cousin! Ah, I remember. Then he must be my cousin too."

"No, not at all. He is no relation of yours."

"Well I sha'n't break my heart. But is he a good partner?"

"I should say, yes. But I hardly know. We used to be a great deal together as children, but papa has been such an invalid lately."

"Ah, I wonder how uncle is getting on at the Vice-Chancellor's. Look, it is past eight by St. Mary's. When were we to go?"

"We were asked for nine."

"Then we must go and dress. Will it be very slow and stiff, Katie? I wish we were going to something not quite so grand."

"You'll find it very pleasant, I dare say."

"There won't be any dancing, though, I know; will there?"

"No; I should think certainly not."

"Dear me! I hope there will be some young men there—I shall be so shy, I know, if there are nothing but wise people. How do you talk to a Regius Professor, Katie? It must be awful."

"He will probably be at least as uncomfortable as you, dear," said Miss Winter, laughing, and rising from the window; "let us go and dress."

"Shall I wear my best gown?—What shall I put in my hair?"

At this moment the door opened, and the maid-servant introduced Mr. Brown.

It was the St. Ambrose drag which had passed along shortly before, bearing the eleven home from a triumphant match. As they came over Magdalen Bridge, Drysdale, who had returned to Oxford as a private gentleman after his late catastrophe, which he had managed to keep a secret from his guardian, and was occupying his usual place on the box, called out—

"Now, boys, keep your eyes open, there must be plenty of lionesses about;" and thus warned, the whole load, including the cornopean player, were on the look-out for lady visitors, profanely called lionesses, all the way up the street. They had been gratified by the sight of several walking in the High Street or looking out of the windows, before they caught sight of Miss Winter and her cousin. The appearance of these young ladies created a sensation.

"I say, look! up there in that first floor."

"By George, they're something like."

"The sitter for choice."

"No, no, the standing-up one; she looks so saucy."

"Hello, Brown, do you know them?"

"One of them is my cousin," said Tom, who had just been guilty of the salutation which, as we saw, excited the indignation of the younger lady.

"What luck!—You'll ask me to meet them—when shall it be? To-morrow at breakfast, I vote."

"I say, you'll introduce me before the ball on Monday? promise now," said another.

"I don't know that I shall see anything of them," said Tom; "I shall just leave a pasteboard, but I'm not in the humor to be dancing about lionizing."

A storm of indignation arose at this speech: the notion that any of the fraternity who had any hold on lionesses, particularly if they were pretty, should not use it to the utmost for the benefit of the rest, and the glory and honor of the college, was revolting to the undergraduate mind. So the whole body escorted Tom to the door of the lodgings, impressing upon him the necessity of engaging both his lionesses for every hour of every day in St. Ambrose's, and left him not till they had heard him ask for the young ladies, and seen him fairly on his way upstairs. They need not have taken so much trouble, for in his secret soul he was no little pleased at the appear-

ance of creditable ladies, more or less belonging to him, and would have found his way to see them quickly and surely enough without any urging. Moreover, he had been really fond of his cousin, years before, when they had been boy and girl together.

So they greeted one another very cordially, and looked one another over as they shook hands, to see what changes time had made. He makes his changes rapidly enough at that age, and mostly for the better, as the two cousins thought. It was nearly three years since they had met, and then he was a fifth-form boy and she a girl in the school-room. They were both conscious of a strange pleasure in meeting again, mixed with a feeling of shyness and wonder whether they should be able to step back into their old relations.

Mary looked on demurely, really watching them, but ostensibly engaged on the rosebud trimming. Presently Miss Winter turned to her and said, "I don't think you two ever met before; I must introduce you, I suppose;—my cousin Tom, my cousin Mary."

"Then we must be cousins too," said Tom, holding out his hand.

"No, Katie says not," she answered.

"I don't mean to believe her, then," said Tom; "but what are you going to do now, to night? Why didn't you write and tell me you were coming?"

"We have been so shut up lately, owing to papa's bad health, that I really had almost forgotten that you were at Oxford."

"By the bye," said Tom, "where is uncle?"

"Oh, he is dining at the Vice-Chancellor's, who is an old college friend of his. We have only been up here three or four hours, and it has done him so much good. I am so glad we spirited him up to coming."

"You haven't made any engagements yet, I hope?"

"Indeed we have; I can't tell how many. We came in time for luncheon in Balliol. Mary and I made it our dinner, and we have been seeing sights ever since, and have been asked to go to I don't know how many luncheons and breakfasts."

"What, with a lot of dons, I suppose?" said Tom, spitefully; "you won't enjoy Oxford, then; they'll bore you to death."

"There now, Katie; that is just what I was afraid of," joined in Mary; "you remember we didn't hear a word about balls all the afternoon."

"You haven't got your tickets for the balls, then?" said Tom, brightening up.

"No, how shall we get them?"

"Oh, I can manage that, I've no doubt."

"Stop; how are we to go? Papa will never take us."

"You needn't think about that; anybody will chaperone you. Nobody cares about that sort of thing at Commemoration."

"Indeed I think you had better wait till I have talked to papa."

"Then all the tickets will be gone," said Tom. "You must go. Why shouldn't I chaperone you? I know several men whose sisters are going with them."

"No, that will scarcely do, I'm afraid. But really, Mary, we must go and dress."

"Where are you going, then?" said Tom.

"To an evening party at the Vice-Chancellor's; we are asked for nine o'clock, and the half hour has struck."

"Hang the dons; how unlucky that I didn't know before! Have you any flowers, by the way?"

"Not one."

"Then I will try to get you some by the time you are ready. May I?"

"Oh yes, pray, do," said Mary. "That's capital, Katie, isn't it? Now I shall have some thing to put in my hair; I couldn't think what I was to wear."

Tom took a look at the hair in question, and then left them and hastened out to scour the town for flowers, as if his life depended on success. In the morning he would probably have resented as insulting, or laughed at as wildly improbable, the suggestion that he would be so employed before night.

A double chair was drawn up opposite the door when he came back, and the ladies were coming down into the sitting-room.

"Oh look, Katie! What lovely flowers! How very kind of you."

Tom surrendered as much of his burden as that young lady's little round white hands could clasp, to her, and deposited the rest on the table.

"Now, Katie, which shall I wear—this beautiful white rose all by itself, or a wreath of these pansies? Here, I have a wire; I can make them up in a minute." She turned to the glass, and held the rich cream-white rose against her hair, and then turning on Tom, added, "What do you think?"

"I thought fern would suit your hair better than anything else," said Tom; "and so I got these leaves," and he picked out two slender fern-leaves.

"How very kind of you! Let me see, how do you mean? Ah! I see; it will be charming;" and so saying, she held the leaves one in each hand to the sides of her head, and then floated about the room for needle and thread, and with a few nimble stitches fastened together the simple green crown, which her cousin put on for her, making the points meet above her forehead. Mary was wild with delight at the effect, and full of thanks to Tom as he helped them hastily to tie up bouquets, and then, amidst much laughing, they squeezed into the wheel chair together (as the fashions of that day allowed two young ladies to do), and went off to their party, leaving a last injuction on him to go up and put the rest of the flowers in water, and to call directly after breakfast the next day.

He obeyed his orders, and pensively arranged the rest of the flowers in the china ornaments on the mantle-piece, and in a soup plate which he got and placed in the middle of the table, and then spent some minutes examining a pair of gloves and other small articles of women's gear which lay scattered about the room. The gloves particularly attracted him, and he flattened them out and laid them on his own large brown hand, and smiled at the contrast, and took other unjustifiable liberties with them; after which he returned to college and endured much banter as to the time his call had lasted, and promised to engage his cousins as he called them, to grace some festivites in St. Ambrose's at their first spare moment.

The next day, being Show Sunday, was spent by the young ladies in a ferment of spiritual and other dissipation. They attended morning service at eight at the cathedral; breakfasted at a Merton fellow's, from whence they adjourned to University sermon. Here Mary, after two or three utterly ineffectual attempts to understand what the preacher was meaning, soon relapsed into an examination of the bonnets present, and the doctors and proctors on the

floor, and the undergraduates in the gallery. On the whole, she was perhaps, better employed than her cousin, who knew enough of religious party strife to follow the preacher, and was made very uncomfortable by his discourse, which consisted of an attack upon the recent publications of the most eminent and best men in the University. Poor Miss Winter came away with a vague impression of the wickedness of all persons who dare to travel out of beaten tracks, and that the most unsafe state of mind in the world is that which inquires and aspires, and cannot be satisfied with the regulation draught of spiritual doctors in high places. Being naturally of a reverent turn of mind, she tried to think that the discourse had done her good. At the same time she was somewhat troubled by the thought that somehow the best men in all times of which she had read seemed to her to be just those whom the preacher was in fact denouncing, although in words he had praised them as the great lights of the Church. The words which she had heard in one of the lessons kept running in her head, "Truly ye bear witness that ye do allow the deeds of your fathers, for they indeed killed them, but ye build their sepulchres." But she had little leisure to think on the subject, and, as her father praised the sermon as a noble protest against the fearful tendencies of the day to Popery and Pantheism, smothered the questionings of her own heart as well as she could, and went off to luncheon in a common room; after which her father retired to their lodgings, and she and her cousin were escorted to afternoon service at Magdalen, in achieving which last feat that had to encounter a crush only to be equaled by that at the pit entrance to the opera on a Jenny Lind night. But what will not a delicately nurtured British lady go through when her mind is bent either on pleasure or duty?

Poor Tom's feelings throughout the day may be more easily conceived than described. He had called according to order, and waited at their lodgings after breakfast. Of course they did not arrive. He had caught a distant glimpse of them in St. Mary's, but had not been able to approach. He had called again in the afternoon unsuccessfully, so far as seeing them was concerned; but he had found his uncle at home, lying upon the sofa. At first he was much dismayed by this rencontre, but, recovering his presence mind he proceeded, I regret to say, to take the length of the old gentleman's foot, by entering into a minute and sympathizing in-

quiry into the state of his health. Tom had no faith whatever in his uncle's ill-health, and believed—as many persons of robust constitution are too apt to do when brought face to face with nervous patients—that he might shake off the whole of his maladies at any time by a resolute effort, so that his sympathy was all a sham, though, perhaps, one may pardon it, considering the end in view, which was that of persuading the old gentleman to entrust the young ladies to his nephew's care for that evening in the Long Walk; and generally to look upon his nephew, Thomas Brown, as his natural prop and supporter in the University, whose one object in life just now would be to take trouble off his hands, and who was of that rare and precocious steadiness of character that he might be as safely trusted as a Spanish duenna. To a very considerable extent the victim fell into the toils. He had many old friends at the colleges, and was very fond of good dinners, and long sittings afterwards. This very evening he was going to dine at St. John's, and had been much troubled at the idea of having to leave the unrivalled old port of that learned house to escort his daughter and niece to the Long Walk. Still he was too easy and good-natured not to wish that they might get there, and did not like the notion of their going with perfect strangers. Here was a compromise. His nephew was young, but still he was a near relation, and in fact it gave the poor old man a plausable excuse for not exerting himself as he felt he ought to do, which was all he ever required for shifting his responsibilities and duties upon other shoulders.

So Tom waited quietly till the young ladies came home, which they did just before hall-time. Mr. Winter was getting impatient. As soon as they arrived he started for St. John's, after advising them to remain at home for the evening, as they looked quite tired and knocked up; but if they resolved to go to the Long Walk, his nephew would escort them.

"How can Uncle Robert say we look so tired?" said Mary, consulting the glass on the subject; "I feel quite fresh. Of course, Katie, you mean to go to the Long Walk?"

"I hope you will go," said Tom; "I think you owe me some amends. I came here according to order this morning, and you were not in, and I have been trying to catch you ever since."

"We could'nt help it," said Miss Winter; "indeed we have not had a minute to ourselves all day. I was very sorry to think that we should have brought you here for nothing this morning."

"But about the Long Walk, Katie?"

"Well, don't you think we have done enough for to-day? I should like to have tea and sit quietly at home, as papa suggested."

"Do you feel very tired, dear?" said Mary, seating herself by her cousin on the sofa, and taking her hand.

"No, dear, I only want a little quiet and a cup of tea."

"Then let us stay here quietly till it is time to start. When ought we to get to the Long Walk?"

"About half-past seven," said Tom; "you shouldn't be much later than that."

"There you see, Katie, we shall have two hours' perfect rest. You shall lie upon the sofa, and I will read to you, and then we shall go on all fresh again."

Miss Winter smiled and said, "Very well." She saw that her cousin was bent on going, and she could deny her nothing."

"May I send you in anything from college?" said Tom; "you ought to have something more than tea, I'm sure."

"Oh no, thank you. We dined in the middle of the day."

"Then I may call you about seven o'clock," said Tom, who had come unwillingly to the conclusion that he had better leave them for the present.

"Yes, and mind you come in good time; we mean to see the whole sight, remember. We are country cousins."

"You must let me call you cousin then, just for the look of the thing."

"Certainly, just for the look of the thing, we will be cousins till further notice."

"Well, you and Tom seem to get on together, Mary," said Miss Winter, as they heard the front door close. "I'm learning a lesson from you, though I doubt whether I shall ever be able to put it in practice. What a blessing it must be not to be shy!"

"Are you shy, then?" said Mary, looking at her cousin with a playful loving smile.

"Yes, dreadfully. It is positive pain to me to walk into a room where there are people I do not know."

"But I feel that too. I'm sure, now, you were much less embarrassed than I last night at the Vice Chancellor's. I quite envied you, you seemed so much at your ease."

"Did I? I would have given anything to be back here quietly. But it is not the same thing with you. You have no real shyness, or you would never have got on so fast with my cousin."

"Oh! I don't feel at all shy with him," said Mary, laughing. "How lucky it is that he found us out so soon. I like him so much. There is a sort of way about him as if he couldn't help himself. I am sure one could turn him round one's finger. Don't you think so?"

"I'm not so sure of that. But he always was soft-hearted, poor boy. But he isn't a boy any longer. You must take care, Mary. Shall we ring for tea?"

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE LONG WALK IN CHRISTCHURCH MEADOWS.

"Do well unto thyself and men will speak good of thee," is a maxim as old as King David's time, and just as true now as it was then. Hardy had found it so since the publication of the class list. Within a few days of that event it was known that his was a very good first. His college tutor had made his own inquiries, and repeated on several occasions in a confidential way the statement that, "with the exception of a want of polish in his Latin and Greek verses, which we seldom get except in the most finished public-school men—Etonians in particular—there has been no better examination in the schools for several years." The worthy tutor went on to take glory to the college, and in a lower degree to himself. He called attention, in more than one common room, to the fact that Hardy had never had any private tuition, but had attained his intellectual development solely in the *curriculum* provided by St. Ambrose's College for the training of the youth intrusted to her. "He himself, indeed," he would add, "had always taken much interest in Hardy, and had, perhaps, done more for him than would be possible in every case, but only with direct reference to, and in supplement of the college course."

The Principal had taken marked and somewhat pompous notice of him, and had graciously intimated his wish, or, perhaps I should say, his will (for he would have been much astonished to be told that a wish of his could count for less than a royal mandate to any man who had been one of his servitors), that Hardy should stand for a fellowship which had lately fallen vacant. A few weeks before, this excessive affability and condescension of the great man would have wounded Hardy; but, somehow, the sudden rush of sunshine and prosperity, though it had not thrown him off his balance, or changed his estimate of men and things had pulled a sort of comfortable sheath over his sensitiveness, and gave him a second skin, as it were, from which the Principal's shafts bounded off innocuous, instead of piercing and rankling. At first, the idea of standing for a fellowship at St, Ambrose's was not pleasant to him. He felt inclined to open up entirely new ground for himself, and stand at some other college, where he had neither acquaintance nor association. But on second thoughts, he resolved to stick to his old college, moved thereto partly by the lamentations of Tom, when he heard of his friends meditated emigration, but chiefly by the unwillingness to quit a hard post for an easier one, which besets natures like his to their own discomfort, but, may one hope, to the single benefit of the world at large. Such men may see clearly enough all the advantages of a move of this kind—may quite appreciate the ease which it would bring them—may be impatient with themselves for not making it at once—but, when it comes to the actual leaving the old post, even though it may be a march out with all the honors of war, drums beating and colors flying, as it would have been in Hardy's case, somehow or another, nine times out of ten, they throw up the chance at the last moment, if not earlier; pick up their old arms—growling perhaps at the price they are paying to keep their own self-respect—and shoulder back into the press to face their old work, muttering. "We are asses; we don't know what's good for us; but we must see this job through somehow, come what may."

So Hardy stayed on at St. Ambrose, waiting for the fellowship examination, and certainly, I am free to confess, not a little enjoying the change in his position and affairs.

He had given up his low dark back rooms to the new servitor, his successor, to whom he had presented all the

rickety furniture, except his two Windsor chairs and Oxford reading-table. The intrinsic value of the gift was not great, certainly, but was of importance to the poor raw boy who was taking his place; and it was made with the delicacy of one who knew the situation. Hardy's good offices did not stop here. Having tried the bed himself for upwards of three long years, he knew all the hard places, and was resolved while he stayed up that they should never chafe another occupant as they had him. So he set himself to provide stuffing, and took the lad about with him, and cast a skirt of his newly-acquired mantle of respectability over him, and put him in the way of making himself as comfortable as circumstances would allow; never disguising from him all the while that the bed was not to be a bed of roses. In which pursuit, though not yet a fellow, perhaps he was qualifying himself better for a fellowship than he could have done by any amount of cramming for polish in his versification. Not that the electors of St. Ambrose would be likely to hear of or appreciate this kind of training. Polished versification would no doubt have told more in that quarter. But we who are behind the scenes may disagree with them, and hold that he who is thus acting out and learning to understand the meaning of the word "fellowship," is the man for our votes.

"So Hardy had left his rooms and gone out of college, into lodgings near at hand. The sword, epaulettes, and picture of his father's old ship—his tutelary divinities, as Tom called them—occupied their accustomed places in his new rooms, except that there was a looking-glass over the mantel-piece here, by the side of which the sword hung, instead of in the centre, as it had done while he had no such luxury. His Windsor chairs occupied each side of the pleasant window of his sitting-room, and already the taste for luxuries of which he had so often accused himself to Tom began to peep out in the shape of one or two fine engravings. Altogether fortune was smiling on Hardy, and he was making the most of her, like a wise man, having brought her round by proving that he could get on without her, and was not going out of the way to gain her smiles. Several men came at once, even before he had taken his B. A. degree, to read with him, and others applied to know whether he would take a reading party in the long vacation. In short, all things went well with Hardy, and the Oxford world recognized the fact, and tradesmen and college

servants became obsequious, and began to bow before him, and recognize him as one of their lords and masters.

It was to Hardy's lodgings that Tom repaired straightway, when he left his cousin by blood, and cousin by courtesy, at the end of the last chapter. For, running over in his mind all his acquaintance, he at once fixed upon Hardy as the man to accompany him in escorting the ladies to the Long Walk. Besides being his own most intimate friend, Hardy was the man whom he would prefer to all others to introduce to ladies now. "A month ago it might have been different," Tom thought; "he was such an old guy in his dress. But he has smartened up, and wears as good a coat as I do, and looks well enough for anybody, though he never will be much of a dresser. Then he will be in a bachelor's gown too, which will look respectable."

"Here you are; that's all right; I'm so glad you're in," he said as he entered the room. "Now I want you to come to the Long Walk with me to-night."

"Very well—will you call for me?"

"Yes, and mind you come in your best get-up, old fellow: we shall have two of the prettiest girls who are up, with us."

"You won't want me then; they will have plenty of escort."

"Not a bit of it. They are deserted by their natural guardian, my old uncle, who has gone out to diuner. Oh, it's all right; they are my cousins, more like sisters, and my uncle knows we are going. In fact it was he who settled that I should take them."

"Yes, but you see I don't know them."

"That doesn't matter, I can't take them both myself—I must have somebody with me, and I'm so glad to get the chance of introducing you to some of my people. You'll know them all, I hope, before long."

"Of course I should like it very much, if you are sure it's all right."

Tom was perfectly sure as usual, and so the matter was arranged. Hardy was very much pleased and gratified at this proof of his friend's confidence; and I am not going to say that he did not shave again, and pay most unwonted attention to his toilet before the hour fixed for Tom's return. The fame of Brown's lionesses had spread through St. Ambrose's already, and Hardy had heard of them as well as other men. There was something so unusual to him in be-

ing selected on such an occasion, when the smartest men in the college were wishing and plotting for that which came to him unasked, that he may be pardoned for feeling something a little like vanity, while he adjusted the coat which Tom had recently thought of with such complacency, and looked in the glass to see that his gown hung gracefully. The effect on the whole was so good, that Tom was above measure astonished when he came back, and could not help indulging in some gentle chaff as they walked towards the High-street arm in arm.

The young ladies were quite rested, and sitting dressed and ready for their walk, when Tom and Hardy were announced, and entered the room. Miss Winter rose up, surprised and a little embarrassed at the introduction of a total stranger in her father's absence. But she put a good face on the matter, as became a well-bred young woman, though she secretly resolved to lecture Tom in private, as he introduced "My great friend, Mr. Hardy, of our college. My cousins." Mary dropped a pretty little demure courtesy, lifting her eyes for one moment for a glance at Tom, which said as plain as look could speak, "Well, I must say you are making the most of your new-found relationship." He was a little put out for a moment, but then recovered himself, and said apologetically,

"Mr. Hardy is a bachelor, Kate—I mean a Bachelor of Arts, and he knows all the people by sight up here. We couldn't have gone to the Walk without some one to show us the lions."

"Indeed, I'm afraid you give me too much credit," said Hardy. "I know most of our dons by sight, certainly, but scarcely any of the visitors."

The awkwardness of Tom's attempted explanation set everything wrong again.

Then came one of those awkward pauses which will occur so very provokingly at the most inopportune times. Miss Winter was seized with one of the uncontrollable fits of shyness, her bondage to which she had so lately been grieving over to Mary; and in self-defence, and without meaning in the least to do so, drew himself up, and looked as proud as you please.

Hardy, whose sensitiveness was almost as keen as a woman's, felt in a moment the awkwardness of the situation, and became as shy as Miss Winter herself. If the floor would have suddenly opened, and let him through into the

dark shop, he would have been thankful; but, as it would not, there he stood, meditating a sudden retreat from the room, and a tremendous onslaught on Tom, as soon as he could catch him alone, for getting him into such a scrape. Tom was provoked with them all for not at once feeling at ease with one another, and stood twirling his cap by the tassel, and looking fiercely at it, resolved not to break the silence. He had been at all the trouble of bringing about this charming situation, and now nobody seemed to like it, or to know what to say or do. They ought to get themselves out of it as they could, for anything he cared; he was not going to bother himself any more.

Mary looked in the glass, to see that her bonnet was quite right, and then from one to another of her companions, in a little wonder at their unaccountable behavior, and a little pique that two young men should be standing there like unpleasant images, and not availing themselves of the privilege of trying, at least, to make themselves agreeable to her. Luckily, however, for the party, the humorous side of the tableau struck her with great force, so that when Tom lifted his misanthropic eyes for a moment, and caught hers, they were so full of fun that he had nothing to do but to allow herself, not without a struggle, to break first into a smile, and then into a laugh. This brought all eyes to bear on him, and the ice, being once broken, dissolved as quickly as it had gathered.

"I really can't see what there is to laugh at, Tom," said Miss Winter, smiling herself, nevertheless, and blushing a little, as she worked or pretended to work at buttoning one of her gloves.

"Can't you, Kate? Well, then, isn't it very ridiculous, and enough to make one laugh, that we four should be standing here in a sort of Quaker's meeting, when we ought to be half way to the Long Walk by this time?"

"Oh, do let us start," said Mary; "I know we shall be missing all the best of the sight."

"Come along, then," said Tom, leading the way down stairs, and Hardy and the ladies followed, and they descended into the High Street, walking all abreast, the two ladies together, with a gentleman on either flank. This formation answered well enough on High Street, the broad pavement of that celebrated thoroughfare being favorable to an advance in line. But when they had wheeled into Oriel Lane the narrow pavement at once threw the line

into confusion, and after one or two fruitless attempts to take up the dressing they settled down into the more natural formation of close column of couples, the leading couple consisting of Mary and Tom, and the remaining couple of Miss Winter and Hardy. It was a lovely midsummer evening, and Oxford was looking her best under the genial cloudless sky, so that, what with the usual congratulations on the weather, and explanatory remarks on the buildings as they passed along, Hardy managed to keep up a conversation with his companion without much difficulty. Miss Winter was pleased with his quiet, deferential manner, and soon lost her feeling of shyness; and, before Hardy had come to the end of such remarks as it occurred to him to make, she was taking her fare share in the talk. In describing their day's doings she spoke with enthusiasm of the beauty of Magdalen Chapel, and betrayed a little knowledge of traceries and mouldings, which gave an opening to her companion to travel out of the weather and the names of colleges. Church architecture was just one of the subjects which was sure at that time to take more or less hold on every man at Oxford whose mind was open to the influences of the place. Hardy had read the usual text-books, and kept his eyes open as he walked about the town and neighborhood. To Miss Winter he seemed so learned on the subject, that she began to doubt his tendencies, and was glad to be reassured by some remarks which fell from him as to the University sermon which she had heard. She was glad to find that her cousin's most intimate friend was not likely to lead him into the errors of Tractarianism.

Meantime the leading couple were getting on satisfactorily in their own way.

"Isn't it good of Uncle Robert? he says that he shall feel quite comfortable as long as you and Katie are with me. In fact, I feel quite responsible already, like an old dragon in a story-book watching a treasure."

"Yes, but what does Katie say to being made a treasure of? She has to think a good deal for herself; and I am afraid you are not quite certain of being our sole knight and guardian because Uncle Robert wants to get rid of us. Poor old uncle!"

"But you wouldn't object, then?"

"Oh, dear, no—at least, not unless you take to looking as cross as you did just now in our lodgings. Of course, I'm

ll for dragons who are mad about dancing, and never hink of leaving a ball-room till the band packs up and the ld man shuffles in to put out the lights."

"Then I shall be a model dragon," said Tom. Twenty-our hours earlier he had declared that nothing should in-uce him to go to the balls; but his views on the subject ad been greatly modified, and he had been worrying all is acquaintance, not unsuccessfully, for the necessary ickets, ever since his talk with his cousins on the preceding vening.

The scene became more and more gay and lively as they assed out of Christchurch towards the Long Walk. The own turned out to take its share in the show; and citizens f all ranks, the poorer ones accompanied by children of all ges, trooped along cheek by jowl with members of the niversity, of all degrees, and their visitors, somewhat in-eed to the disgust of certain of these latter, many of whom leclared that the whole thing was spoilt by the miscellanc-usness of the crowd, and that "those sort of people" ught not to be allowed to come to the Long Walk on Show Sunday. However, "those sort of people" abounded nevertheless, and seemed to enjoy very much, in sober fashion, the solemn march up and down beneath the grand avenue of elms in the midst of their betters.

The University was there in strength, from the Vice-Chancellor downwards. Somehow or another, though it might seem an unreasonable thing at first sight for grave and reverend persons to do, yet most of the gravest of them found some reason for taking a turn in the Long Walk. As for the undergraduates, they turned out almost to a man, and none of them more certainly than the young gentle-men, elaborately dressed, who had sneered at the whole ceremony as snobbish an hour or two before.

As for our hero, he sailed into the meadows thoroughly satisfied for the moment with himself and his convoy. He had every reason to be so, for though there were many gayer and more fashionably dressed ladies present than his cousin, and cousin by courtesy, there were none there whose faces, figures and dresses carried more unmistakably the marks of that thorough quiet high breeding, that refine-ment which is no mere surface polish, and that fearless un-consciousness which looks out from pure hearts, which are still, thank God, to be found in so many homes of the English gentry.

The Long Walk was filling rapidly, and at every half-dozen paces Tom was greeted by some of his friends or acquaintance, and exchanged a word or two with them. But he allowed them one after another to pass by without effecting any introduction.

"You seem to have a great many acquaintances," said his companion, upon whom none of these salutations were lost.

"Yes, of course; one gets to know a great many men up here."

"It must be very pleasant. But does it not interfere a great deal with your reading?"

"No; because one meets them at lectures, and in hall and chapel. Besides," he added in a sudden fit of honesty, "it is my first year. One doesn't read much in one's first year. It is a much harder thing than people think to take to reading, except just before an examination."

"But your great friend who is walking with Katie—what did you say his name is?"

"Hardy."

"Well, he is a great scholar, didn't you say?"

"Yes, he has just taken a first class. He is the best man of his year."

"How proud you must be of him! I suppose, now, he is a great reader?"

"Yes, he is great at everything. He is nearly the best oar in our boat. By the way, you will come to the procession of boats to-morrow night? We are the head boat on the river."

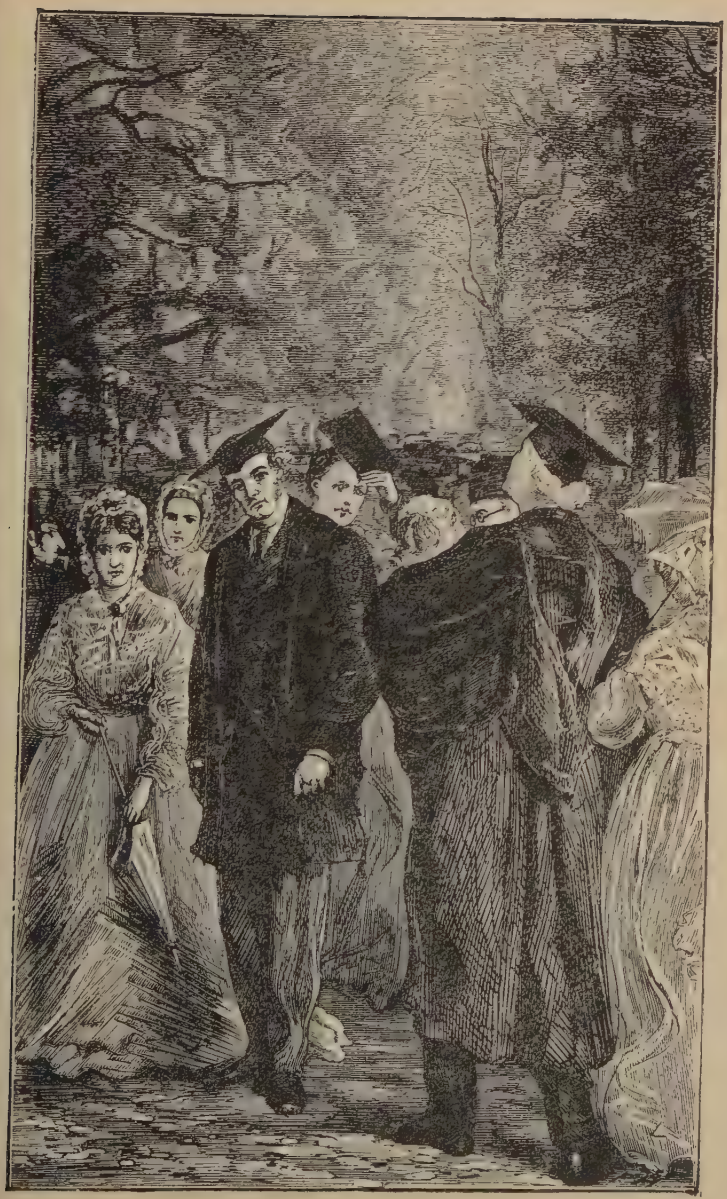
"Oh, I hope so. Is it a pretty sight? Let us ask Katie about it."

"It is the finest sight in the world," said Tom, who has never seen it; "twenty-four eight oars with their flags flying, and all the crews in uniform. You see the barges over there, moored along the side of the river? You will sit on one of them as we pass."

"Yes, I think I do," said Mary, looking across the meadow in the direction in which he pointed; "you mean those great gilded things. But I don't see the river."

"Shall we walk round there. It won't take up ten minutes."

"But we must not leave the Walk and all the people. It is so amusing here."



"Show Sunday" in the Broad Walk.

"Then you will wear our colors at the procession to-mor-ow?"

"Yes, if Katie doesn't mind. At least if they are pretty. What are your colors?"

"Blue and white. I will get you some ribbons to-morrow orning."

"Very well, and I will make them up into rosettes."

"Why, do you know them?" asked Tom, as she bowed two gentlemen in masters' caps and gowns, whom they et in the crowd.

"Yes; at least we met them last night."

"But do you know who they are?"

"Oh, yes; they were introduced to us, and I talked a reat deal to them. And Katie scolded me for it when we ot home. No; I won't say scolded me but looked very rave over it."

"They are two of the leaders of the Tractarians."

"Yes. That was the fun of it. Katie was so pleased nd interested with them at first; much more than I was. ut when she found out who they were she fairly ran way, and I stayed and talked on. I don't think they said nything very dangerous. Perhaps one of them wrote No. 0. Do you know?"

"I dare say. But I don't know much about it. How-ver, they must have a bad time of it, I should think, up ere with the old dons."

"But don't you think one likes people who are persecut-d? I declare I would listen to them for an hour, though didn't understand a word, just to show them that I wasn't raid of them, and sympathized with them. How can eople be so ill-natured? I'm sure they only write what ey believe and think will do good."

"That's just what most of us feel," said Tom; "we hate see them put down because they don't agree with the vells up here. You'll see how they will be cheered in the heatre."

"Then they are not unpopular and persecuted after all?"

"Oh yes, by the dons. And that's why we all like them. rom fellow-feeling you see, because the dons bully them nd us equally."

"But I thought they were dons too?"

"Well, so they are, but not regular dons, you know, like ne proctors, and deans, and that sort."

His companion did not understand this delicate distinction, but was too much interested in watching the crowd to inquire further.

Presently they met two of the heads of houses walking with several strangers. Every one was noticing them when they passed, and of course Tom was questioned as to who they were. Not being prepared with an answer he appealed to Hardy, who was just behind them talking to Miss Winter. They were some of the celebrities on whom honorary degrees were to be conferred, Hardy said; a famous American author, a foreign ambassador, a well-known Indian soldier, and others. Then came some more M.A.'s, one of whom this time bowed to Miss Winter.

"Who was that, Katie?"

"One of the gentlemen we met last night. I did not catch his name, but he was very agreeable."

"Oh, I remember. You were talking to him for a long time after you ran away from me. I was very curious to know what you were saying, you seemed so interested."

"Well, you seem to have made the most of your time last night," said Tom; "I should have thought, Katie, you would hardly have approved of him either."

"But who is he?"

"Why, the most dangerous man in Oxford. What do they call him—a Germanizer and a rationalist, isn't it, Hardy?"

"Yes, I believe so," said Hardy.

"Oh, think of that! There, Katie; you had much better have stayed by me after all. A Germanizer, didn't you say? What a hard word. It must be much worse than Tractarian. Isn't it, now?

"Mary dear, pray take care; everybody will hear you," said Miss Winter.

"I wish I thought that everybody would listen to me," replied Miss Mary. "But I really will be quiet, Katie,—only I must know which is the worst, my Tractarians or your Germanizer?"

"Oh, the Germanizer, of course," said Tom.

"But why?" said Hardy, who could do no less than break a lance for his companion. Moreover, he happened to have strong convictions on these subjects.

"Why? Because one knows the worst of where the Tractarians are going. They may go to Rome and there

an end of it. But the Germanizers are going into the abysses, or no one knows where."

"There, Katie, you hear, I hope," interrupted Miss Mary, coming to her companion's rescue before Hardy could bring his artillery to bear, "but what a terrible place Oxford must be. I declare it seems quite full of people whom it is unsafe to talk with."

"I wish it were, if they were all like Miss Winter's friend," said Hardy. And then the crowd thickened and they dropped behind again. Tom was getting to think more of his companion and less of himself every minute, when he was suddenly confronted in the walk by Benjamin, the Jew money-lender, smoking a cigar, and dressed in a gaudy figured satin waistcoat and waterfall of the same material, and resplendent with jewelry. He had business to attend to in Oxford at this time of the year. Nothing escaped the eyes of Tom's companion.

"Who was that?" she said; "what a dreadful-looking man! Surely he bowed as if he knew you?"

"I dare say. He is impudent enough for anything," said Tom.

"But who is he?"

"Oh, a rascally fellow who sells bad cigars and worse wine."

Tom's equanimity was much shaken by the apparition of the Jew. The remembrance of the bill scene at the public house in the Corn-market, and the unsatisfactory prospect in that matter, with Blake plucked and Drysdale no longer a member of the University, and utterly careless as to his liabilities, came across him, and made him silent and absent.

He answered at hazard to his companion's remarks for the next minute or two, until after some particularly inappropriate reply, she turned her head and looked at him for a moment with steady wide open eyes, which brought him to himself, or rather drove him into himself, in no time.

"I really beg your pardon," he said; "I was very rude, I fear. It is so strange to me to be walking here with ladies What were you saying?"

"Nothing of any consequence—I really forget. But it is a very strange thing for you to walk with ladies here?"

"Strange! I should think it was! I have never seen a lady that I knew up here, till you came."

"Indeed! but there must be plenty of ladies living in Oxford?"

"I don't believe there are. At least, we never see them."

"Then you ought to be on your best behavior when we do come. I shall expect you now to listen to everything I say, and to answer my silliest questions."

"Oh, you ought not to be so hard on us."

"You mean that you find it hard to answer silly questions? How wise you must all grow, living up here together!"

"Perhaps. But the wisdom doesn't come down to the first-year men; and so—"

"Well, why do you stop?"

"Because I was going to say something you might not like."

"Then I insist on hearing it. Now, I shall not let you off. You were saying that wisdom does not come so low as first-year men; and so—what?"

"And so—and so, they are not wise."

"Yes, of course; but that was not what you were going to say; and so—"

"And so they are generally agreeable, for wise people are always dull; and so—ladies ought to avoid the dons."

"And not avoid first year men?"

"Exactly so."

"Because they are foolish, and therefore fit company for ladies. Now, really—"

"No, no; because they are foolish, and, therefore, they ought to be made wise; and ladies are wiser than dons."

"And therefore, duller, for all wise people, you said, were dull."

"Not all wise people; only people who are wise by cramming,—as dons; but ladies are wise by inspiration."

"And first-year men, are they foolish by inspiration and agreeable by cramming, or agreeable by inspiration and foolish by cramming?"

"They are agreeable by inspiration in the society of ladies."

"Then they can never be agreeable, for you say they never see ladies."

"Not with the bodily eye, but with the eye of fancy."

"Then their agreeableness must be all fancy."

"But it is better to be agreeable in fancy than dull in reality."

"That depends upon whose fancy it is. To be agree-

able in your own fancy is compatible with being dull in reality as—"

"How you play with words! I see you won't leave me a shred either of fancy or agreeableness to stand on."

"Then I shall do you good service. I shall destroy your illusions; you cannot stand on illusions."

"But remember what my illusions were—fancy and agreeableness."

"But your agreeableness stood on fancy, and your fancy on nothing. You had better settle down at once on the solid basis of dullness like the dons."

"Then I am to found myself on fact, and try to be dull? What a conclusion! But perhaps dullness is no more a fact than fancy; what is dullness?"

"Oh, I do not undertake to define; you are the best judge."

"How severe you are! Now, see how generous I am. Dullness in society is the absence of ladies."

"Alas, poor Oxford! Who is that in the velvet sleeves? Why do you touch your cap?"

"That is the Proctor. He is our Cerberus; he has to keep all undergraduates in good order."

"What a task! He ought to have three heads."

"He has only one head, but it is a very long one. And he has a tail like any Basha, composed of pro-proctors, marshals and bull-dogs, and I don't know what all. But to go back to what we were saying—"

"No, don't let us go back. I'm tired of it; besides you were just beginning about dulness. How can you expect me to listen now?"

"Oh, but do listen, just for two minutes. Will you be serious? I do want to know what you really think when you hear the case."

"Well, I will try—for two minutes, mind."

Upon gaining which permission Tom went off into an interesting discourse on the unnaturalness of men's lives at Oxford, which it is by no means necessary to inflict on our readers.

As he was waxing eloquent and sentimental, he chanced to look from his companion's face for a moment in search of a simile, when his eyes alighted on that virtuous member of society, Dick, the factotum of "The Choughs," who was taking his turn in the Long Walk with his betters. Dick's

face was twisted into an uncomfortable grin: his eyes were fixed on Tom and his companion; and he made a sort of half motion towards touching his hat, but couldn't quite carry it through, and so passed by.

"Ah! ain't he a going of it again," he muttered to himself; "jest like 'em all."

Tom didn't hear the words, but the look had been quite enough for him, and he broke off short in his speech, and turned his head away, and, after two or three flounderings which Mary seemed not to notice, stopped short, and let Miss Winter and Hardy join them.

"It's getting dark," he said, as they came up; "the Walk is thinning; ought we not to be going? Remember, I am in charge."

"Yes, I think it is time."

At this moment the great Christchurch bell—Tom by name—began to toll.

"Surely that can't be Tom?" Miss Winter said, who had heard the one hundred and one strokes on former occasions.

"Indeed it is, though."

"But how very light it is."

"It is almost the longest day in the year, and there hasn't been a cloud all day."

They started to walk home all together, and Tom gradually recovered himself, but left the laboring oar to Hardy, who did his work very well, and persuaded the ladies to go on and see the Ratcliffe by moonlight—the only time to see it, as he said, because of the shadows—and just to look in at the old quadrangle of St. Ambrose.

It was almost ten o'clock when they stopped at the lodgings in High-street. While they were waiting for the door to be opened, Hardy said—

"I really must apologize, Miss Winter, to you, for my intrusion to-night. I hope your father will allow me to call on him."

"Oh yes! pray do; he will be so glad to see any friend of my cousin's."

"And if I can be of any use to him; or to you, or your sister—"

"My sister! Oh, you mean Mary? She is not my sister."

"I beg your pardon. But I hope you will let me know if there is anything I can do for you."

"Indeed we will. Now, Mary, papa will be worrying about us." And so the young ladies said their adieus and disappeared.

"Surely you told me they were sisters," said Hardy, as the two walked away towards college.

"No, did I? I don't remember."

"But they are your cousins?"

"Yes; at least Katie is. Don't you like her?"

"Of course; one can't help liking her. But she says you have not met for two years or more."

"No more we have."

"Then I suppose you have seen more of her companion lately?"

"Well, if you must know, I never saw her before yesterday."

"You don't mean to say that you took me in there to-night when you had never seen one of the young ladies before, and the other not for two years! Well, upon my word, Brown—"

"Now dont't blow me up, old fellow, to-night—please don't. There, I give in. Don't hit a fellow when he's down. I'm so low." Tom spoke in such a depreciating tone, that Hardy's wrath passed away.

"Why, what's the matter?" he said. "You seemed to be full of talk. I was envying your fluency I know, often."

"Talk! yes, so I was. But didn't you see Dick in the Walk? You have never heard anything more?"

"No! but no news is good news."

"Heigho! I'm awfully down. I want to talk to you. Let me come up."

"Come along then." And so they disappeared into Hardy's lodgings.

The two young ladies, meanwhile, soothed old Mr. Winter, who had eaten and drank more than was good for him, and was naturally put out thereby. They soon managed to persuade him to retire, and then followed themselves—first to Mary's room, where that young lady burst out at once, "What a charming place it is! Oh! didn't you enjoy your evening, Katie!"

"Yes; but I felt a little awkward without a chaperone. You seemed to get on very well with my cousin. You scarcely spoke to us in the Long Walk till just before we came away. What were you talking about?"

Mary burst into a gay laugh. "All sorts of nonsense," she said. "I don't think I ever talked so much nonsense in my life. I hope he isn't shocked. I don't think he is. But I said anything that came into my head. I couldn't help it. You don't think it wrong?"

"Wrong, dear? No I'm sure you could say nothing wrong."

"I'm not so sure of that. But, Katie dear, I know there is something on his mind."

"Why do you think so?"

"Oh, because he stopped short twice, and became quite absent, and seemed not to hear anything I said."

"How odd! I never knew him do so. Did you see any reason for it?"

"No; unless it was two men we passed in the crowd. One was a vulgar-looking wretch, who was smoking—a fat black thing, with such a thick nose, covered with jewelry—"

"Not his nose, dear?"

"No, but his dress; and the other was a homely, dried-up little man, like one of your Englebourn troubles. I'm sure there is some mystery about them, and I shall find it out. But how did you like his friend, Katie?"

"Very much indeed. I was rather uncomfortable at walking so long with a stranger. But he was very pleasant, and is so fond of Tom. I am sure he is a very good friend for him."

"He looks a good man; but how ugly!"

"Do you think so? We shall have a hard day to-morrow. Good night, dear."

"Good night, Katie. But I don't feel a bit sleepy." And so the cousins kissed one another, and Miss Winter went to her own room."

CHAPTER XXVII.

LECTURING A LIONESS.

THE evening of Show Sunday may serve as a fair sample of what this eventful Commemoration was to our hero. The constant intercourse with ladies—with such ladies as Miss Winter and Mary—young, good looking, well spoken,

and creditable in all ways, was very delightful, and the more fascinating, from the sudden change which their presence wrought in the ordinary mode of life of the place. They would have been charming in any room, but were quite irrepressible in his den, which no female presence, except that of his blowsy old bed-maker, had lightened since he had been in possession. All the associations of the freshman's room were raised at once. When he came in at night now, he could look sentimentally at his arm chair (christened "The Captain," after Captain Hardy), on which Katie had sat to make breakfast; or at the brass peg on the door, on which Mary had hung her bonnet and shawl, after displacing his gown. His very teacups and saucers, which were already a miscellaneous set of several different patterns, had made a move almost into his affections; at least the two—one brown one blue—which the young ladies had used. A human interest belonged to them now, and they were no longer mere crockery. He had thought of buying two very pretty china ones, the most expensive he could find in Oxford, and getting them to use these for the first time, but rejected the idea. The fine new ones, he felt, would never be the same to him. They had come in and used his own rubbish; that was the great charm. If he had been going to give *them* cups, no material would have been beautiful enough; but for his own use after them, the commoner the better. The material was nothing, the association everything. It is marvellous the amount of healthy sentiment of which a naturally soft-hearted undergraduate is capable by the end of the summer term. But sentiment is not all one-sided. The delights which spring from sudden intimacy with the fairest and best part of the creation, are as far above those of the ordinary, unmitigated undergraduate life, as the British citizen of 1860 is above the rudimentary personage in prehistoric times from whom he has been gradually improved up to his present state of enlightment and perfection. But each state has also its own troubles as well as its pleasures; and, though the former are a price which no decent fellow would boggle at for a moment, it is useless to pretend that paying them is pleasant.

Now, at Commemoration, as elsewhere, where men do congregate, if your lady-visitors are not pretty or agreeable enough to make your friends and acquaintances eager to know them, and to cater for their enjoyment, and try in all ways to win their favor and cut you out, you have the sat-

isfaction at any rate of keeping them to yourself, though you lose the pleasures which arise from being sought after, and made much of for their sakes, and feeling raised above the ruck of your neighbors. On the other hand, if they are all like this, you might as well try to keep the sunshine and air to yourself. Universal human nature rises up against you; and besides, they will not stand it themselves. And, indeed, why should they? Women, to be very attractive to all sorts of different people, must have great readiness of sympathy. Many have it naturally, and many work hard in acquiring a good imitation of it. In the first case it is against the nature of such persons to be monopolized for more than a very short time; in the second, all their trouble would be thrown away if they allowed themselves to be monopolized. Once in their lives, indeed, they will be, and ought to be, and that monopoly lasts, or should last, forever; but instead of destroying in them that which was their great charm, it only deepens and widens it, and the sympathy which was before fitful, and, perhaps, wayward, flows on in a calm and healthy stream, blessing and cheering all who come within reach of its exhilarating and life-giving waters.

But man of all ages is a selfish animal, and unreasonable in his selfishness. It takes every one of us in turn many a shrewd fall in our wrestlings with the world to convince us that we are not to have everything our own way. We are conscious in our inmost souls that man is the rightful lord of creation; and, starting from this eternal principle, and ignoring, each man-child of us in turn, the qualifying truth that it is to man in general, including women, and not to Thomas Brown in particular, that the earth has been given, we set about asserting our kingships each in his own way, and proclaiming ourselves kings from our little ant-hills of thrones. And then come the strugglings and the down-fallings, and some of us learn our lesson, and some learn it not. But what lesson? That we have been dreaming in the golden hours when the vision of a kingdom rose before us? That there is in short no kingdom at all, or that, if there be, we are no heirs of it?

No—I take it that, while we make nothing better than that out of our lesson, we shall have to go on spelling at it and stumbling over it, through all the days of our life, till we make our last stumble, and take our final header out of this riddle of a world, which we once dreamed we were to

rule over exclaiming "vanitas vanitatum" to the end. But man's spirit will never be satisfied without a kingdom, and was never intended to be satisfied so; and a wiser than Solomon tells us day by day that our kingdom is about us here, and that we may rise up and pass in when we will at the shining gates which He holds open, for that it is His, and we are joint heirs of it with Him.

On the whole, however, making allowances for all drawbacks, those Commemoration days were the pleasantest days Tom had ever known at Oxford. He was with his uncle and cousins early and late, devising all sorts of pleasant entertainments and excursions for them, introducing all the pleasantest men of his acquaintance and taxing the resources of the college, which at such times were available for undergraduates as well as their betters, to minister to their comfort and enjoyment. And he was well repaid. There was something perfectly new to the ladies, and very piquaut in the life and habits of the place. They found it very diverting to be receiving in Tom's rooms, presiding over his breakfasts and luncheons, altering the position of his furniture, and making the place look as pretty as circumstances would allow. Then there was pleasant occupation for every spare hour, and the fêtes and amusements were all unlike everything but themselves. Of course the ladies at once became enthusiastic St. Ambrosians, and managed in spite of all distractions to find time for making up rosettes and bows of blue and white, in which to appear at the procession of the boats, which was the great event of the Monday. Fortunately Mr. Winter had been a good oar in his day, and had pulled in one of the first four-oars in which the University races had commenced some thirty-five years before; and Tom, who had set his mind on managing his uncle, worked him up almost into enthusiasm and forgetfulness of his maladies, so that he raised no objection to a five o'clock dinner, and an adjournment to the river almost immediately afterwards. Jervis, who was all-powerful on the river, at Tom's instigation got an arm-chair for him in the best part of the University barge, while the ladies, after walking along the bank with Tom and others of the crew, and being instructed in the colors of the different boats, and the meaning of the ceremony, took their places in the front row on the top of the barge, beneath the awning and the flags, and looked down

with nundreds of other fair strangers on the scene, which certainly merited all that Tom had said of it on faith.

The barges above and below the University barge, which occupied the post of honor, were also covered with ladies, and Christchurch Meadow swarmed with gay dresses and caps and gowns. On the opposite side the bank was lined with a crowd in holiday clothes, and the punts plied across without intermission loaded with people, till the groups stretched away down the towing path in an almost continuous line to the starting place. Then one after another the racing-boats, all painted and polished up for the occasion, with the college flags drooping at their sterns, put out and passed down to their stations, and the bands played, and the sun shone his best. And then after a short pause of expectation the distant bank became all alive, and the groups all turned one way, and came up the towing path again, and the foremost boat with the blue and white flag shot through the Gut and came up the reach, followed by another, and another, and another, till they were tired of counting, and the leading boat was already close to them before the last had come within sight. And the bands played up all together, and the crowd on both sides cheered as the St. Ambrose boat spurted from the Cherwell, and took the place of honor at the winning-post, opposite the University barge, and close under where they were sitting.

"Oh, look, Katie dear; here they are. There's Tom, and Mr. Hardy, and Mr. Jervis;" and Mary waved her handkerchief and clapped her hands, and was in an ecstacy of enthusiasm, in which her cousin was no whit behind her. The gallant crew of St. Ambrose were by no means unconscious of, and fully appreciated the compliment.

Then the boats passed up one by one; and, as each came opposite to the St. Ambrose boat, the crews tossed their oars and cheered, and the St. Ambrose crew tossed their oars and cheered in return; and the whole ceremony went off in triumph, notwithstanding the casualty which occurred to one of the torpids. The torpids being filled with the refuse of the rowing men—generally awkward or very young oarsmen—find some difficulty in the act of tossing; no safe operation for an unsteady crew. Accordingly, the torpid in question, having sustained her crew gallantly till the saluting point, and allowed them to get their oars fairly into the air, proceeded gravely to turn over on her side, and shoot them out into the stream.

A thrill ran along the top of the barges, and a little scream or two might have been heard even through the notes of Annie Laurie, which were filling the air at the moment; but the band played on, and the crew swam ashore, and two of the punt-men laid hold of the boat and collected the oars, and nobody seemed to think anything of it.

Katie drew a long breath.

"Are they all out, dear?" she said; "can you see? I can only count eight."

"Oh, I was too frightened to look. Let me see; yes, there are nine; there's one by himself, the little man pulling the weeds off his trousers."

And so they regained their equanimity, and soon after left the barge, and were escorted to the hall of St. Ambrose by the crew, who gave an entertainment there to celebrate the occasion, which Mr. Winter was induced to attend and pleased to approve, and which lasted till it was time to dress for the ball, for which a proper chaperone had been providentially found. And so they passed the days and nights of Commemoration.

But is not within the scope of this work to chronicle all their doings—how, notwithstanding balls at night, they were up to chapel in the morning, and attended flower-shows at Worcester and musical promenades in New College, and managed to get down the river for a pic-nic at Nuneham, besides seeing everything that was worth seeing in all the colleges. How it was done, no man can tell; but done it was, and they seemed only the better for it all. They were waiting at the gates of the Theatre amongst the first, tickets in hand, and witnessed the whole scene, wondering no little at the strange mixture of solemnity and licence, the rush and crowding of the undergraduates into their gallery, and their free and easy way of taking the whole proceedings under their patronage, watching every movement in the amphitheatre and on the floor, and shouting approval and disapproval of the heads of their republic of learning, or of the most illustrous visitors, or cheering with equal vigor, the ladies, Her Majesty's ministers, or the prize poems.

It is a strange scene certainly, and has probably puzzled many persons besides young ladies. One can well fancy the astonishment of the learned foreigner, for instance, when he sees the head of the University, which he has reverenced at a distance from his youth up, rise in his robes in solmn con-

vocation to exercise one of the highest of University functions, and hears his sonorous Latin periods interrupted by "three cheers for the ladies in pink bonnets!" or, when some man is introduced for an honorary degree, whose name may be known throughout the civilized world, and the Vice-Chancellor, turning to his compeers, inquires, "Placetne vobis, domini doctors? placetne vobis, magistri?" and he hears the voice of doctors and masters drowned in contradictory shouts from the young *demus* in the gallery, "Who is he?" "Non placet!" "Placet!" "Why does he carry an umbrella?" It is thoroughly English, and that is just all that need, or indeed can, be said for it all; but not one in a hundred of us would alter it if we could, beyond suppressing some of the personalities, which of late years have gone somewhat to far.

After the Theatre there was sumptuous lunch in All Souls', and then a fete in St. John's Gardens. Now, at the aforesaid luncheon, Tom's feelings had been severely tried; in fact, the little troubles, which, as has been before hinted, are incident to persons, especially young men in his fortunate predicament, had here come to a head.

He was separated from his cousin a little way. Being a guest, and not an important one in the eyes of the All Souls fellows, he had to find his level, which was very much below that allotted to his uncle and cousins. In short, he felt that they were taking him about, instead of he them—which change of position was in itself trying; and Mary's conduct fanned his slumbering discontent into a flame. There she was, sitting between a fellow of All Souls', who was a collector of pictures and an authority in fine art matters, and the Indian officer who had been so recently promoted to the degree of D.C.L. in the Theatre. There she sat, so absorbed in their conversation that she did not even hear a remark which he was pleased to address to her.

Whereupon he began to brood on his wrongs, and to take umbrage at the catholicity of her enjoyment and enthusiasm. So long as he had been the medium through which she was brought in contact with others, he had been well enough content that they should amuse and interest her; but it was a very different thing now.

So he watched her jealously, and raked up former conversations, and came to the conclusion that it was his duty to remonstrate with her. He had remarked, too, that she never could talk with him now without breaking away after

a short time into badinage. Her badinage certainly was very charming and pleasant, and kept him on the stretch; but why should she not let him be serious and sentimental when he pleased? She did not break out in this manner with other people. So he really felt it to be his duty to speak to her on the subject—not in the least for his own sake, but for hers.

Accordingly, when the party broke up, and they started for the fete at St. John's, he resolved to carry out his intentions. At first he could not get an opportunity while they were walking about on the beautiful lawn of the great garden, seeing and being seen, and listening to music, and looking at choice flowers. But soon a chance offered. She stayed behind the rest without noticing it, to examine some specially beautiful plant, and he was by her side in a moment, and proposed to show her the smaller garden, which lies beyond, to which she innocently consented; and they were soon out of the crowd, and in comparative solitude.

She remarked that he was somewhat silent and grave, but thought nothing of it, and chatted on as usual, remarking upon the pleasant company she had been in at luncheon.

This opened the way for Tom's lecture.

"How easily you seem to get interested with new people!" he began.

"Do I?" she said. "Well, don't you think it very natural?"

"Wouldn't it be a blessing if people would always say just what they think and mean, though?"

"Yes, and a great many do," she replied, looking at him in some wonder, and not quite pleased with the turn things were taking.

"Any ladies, do you think? You know we haven't many opportunities of observing."

"Yes, I think quite as many ladies as men. More, indeed, as far as my small experience goes."

"You really maintain deliberately that you have met people—men and women—who can talk to you or any one else for a quarter of an hour quite honestly, and say nothing at all which they don't mean—nothing for the sake of flattery, or effect, for instance?"

"Oh dear me, yes, often."

"Who, for example?"

"Our cousin Katie. Why are you so suspicious and misanthropical? There is your friend Mr. Hardy again; what do you say to him?"

"Well, I think you may have hit on an exception. But I maintain the rule."

"You look as if I ought to object. But I shan't. It is no business of mine if you choose to believe any such disagreeable thing about your fellow-creatures."

"I don't believe anything worse about them than I do about myself. I know that I can't do it."

"Well, I am very sorry for you."

"But I don't think I am any worse than my neighbors."

"I don't suppose you do. Who are your neighbors?"

"Shall I include you in the number?"

"Oh, by all means, if you like."

"But I may not mean that you are like the rest. The man who fell among thieves, you know, had one good neighbor."

"Now, Cousin Tom," she said, looking up with sparkling eyes, "I can't return the compliment. You meant to make me feel that I *was* like the rest—at least like what you say they are. You know you did. And now you are just turning round, and trying to slip out of it by saying what *you* don't mean."

"Well, cousin Mary, perhaps I was. At any rate, I was a great fool for my pains. I might have known by this time that you would catch me out fast enough."

"Perhaps you might. I didn't challenge you to set up your Palace of Truth. But, if we are to live in it, you are not to say all the disagreeable things and hear none of them."

"I hope not, if they must be disagreeable. But why should they be? I can't see why you and I, for instance, should not say exactly what we are thinking to one another without being disagreeable."

"Well, I don't think you made a happy beginning just now."

"But I am sure we should all like one another the better for speaking the truth."

"Yes; but I don't admit that I haven't been speaking the truth."

"You won't understand me. Have I said that you don't speak the truth?"

"Yes, you said just now that I don't say what I think and mean. Well, perhaps you didn't exactly say that, but that is what you meant."

"You are very angry, Cousin Mary. Let us wait till—"

"No, no. It was you who began, and I will not let you off now."

"Very well, then. I did mean something of the sort. It is better to tell you than to keep it to myself."

"Yes, and now tell me your reasons," said Mary, looking down and biting her lip. Tom was ready to bite his tongue off, but there was nothing now but to go through with it.

"You make everybody that comes near you think that you are deeply interested in them and their doings. Poor Grey believes that you are as mad as he is about rituals and rubrics. And the boating men declare that you would sooner see a race than go to the best ball in the world. And you listened to the Dean's stale old stories about his schools, and went into raptures in the Bodleian about pictures and art with that follow of All Souls'. Even our old butler and the cook—"

Here Mary, despite her vexation, after a severe struggle to control it, burst into a laugh, which made Tom pause.

"Now you can't say that I am not really fond of jellies," she said.

"And you can't say that I have said anything so very disagreeable."

"Oh, but you have, though."

"At any rate I have made you laugh."

"But you didn't mean to do it. Now, go on."

"I have nothing more to say. You see my meaning, or you never will."

"If you have nothing more to say, you should not have said so much," said Mary. "You wouldn't have me rude to all the people I meet, and I can't help it if the cook thinks I am a glutton."

"But you could help letting Grey think that you should like to go and see his night schools."

"But I should like to see them of all things."

"And I suppose you would like to go through the manuscripts in the Bodleian with the Dean. I heard you talking to him as if it was the dearest wish of your heart, and making a half engagement to go with him this afternoon,

when you know that you are tired to death of him, and so full of other engagements that you don't know where to turn."

Mary began to bite her lips again. She felt half inclined to cry, and half inclined to get up and box his ears. However she did neither, but looked up after a moment or two and said—

"Well, have you any more unkind words to say?"

"Unkind, Mary?"

"Yes, they *are* unkind. How can I enjoy anything now when I shall know you are watching me, and thinking all sorts of harm of everything I say and do? However, it doesn't much matter, for we go to-morrow morning."

"But you will give me credit at least for meaning you well."

"I think you are very jealous and suspicious."

"You don't know how you pain me when you say that."

"But I must say what I think."

Mary set her little mouth, and looked down, and began tapping her boot with her parasol. There was an awkward silence while Tom considered within himself whether she was not right, and whether, after all, his own jealousy had not been the cause of the lecture he had been delivering, much more than any unselfish wish for Mary's improvement.

"It is your turn now," he said presently, leaning forward with his elbows on his knees, and looking hard at the gravel. "I may have been foolishly jealous, and I thank you for telling me so. But you can tell me a great deal more if you will, quite as good for me to hear."

"No, I have nothing to say. I dare say you are open and true, and have nothing to hide or disguise, not even about either of the men we met in the Long Walk on Sunday."

He winced at this random shaft as if he had been stung and she saw that it had gone home, and repented the next moment. The silence became more and more embarrassing. By good luck, however, their party suddenly appeared strolling towards them from the large garden.

"Here are Uncle Robert and Katie, and all of them. Let us join them."

She rose up and he with her, and as they walked toward the rest he said quickly in a low voice, "Will you forgive

me if I have pained you? I was very selfish, and I am very sorry."

"Oh yes, we were both very foolish, but we won't do it again."

"Here you are at last. We have been looking for you everywhere," said Miss Winter, as they came up.

"I'm sure I don't know how we missed you. We came straight from the music tent to this seat, and have not moved. We knew you must come by sooner or later."

"But it is quite out of the way. It is quite by chance that we came round here."

"Isn't Uncle Robert tired, Katie?" said Tom; "he doesn't look well this afternoon."

Katie instantly turned to her father, and Mr. Winter declared himself to be much fatigued. So they wished their hospitable entertainers good-bye, and Tom hurried off and got a wheel chair for his uncle, and walked by his side to their lodgings. The young ladies walked near the chair also, accompanied by one or two of their acquaintances; in fact they could not move without an escort. But Tom never once turned his head for a glance at what was going on, and talked steadily on to his uncle, that he might not catch a stray word of what the rest were saying. Despite of all this self-denial, however, he was quite aware somehow when he made his bow at the door that Mary had been very silent all the way home.

Mr. Winter retired to his room to lie down, and his daughter and niece remained in the sitting-room. Mary sat down and untied her bonnet, but did not burst into her usual flood of comments on the events of the day. Miss Winter looked at her and said—

"You look tired, dear, and over-excited."

"Oh yes, so I am. I've had such a quarrel with Tom."

"A quarrel—you're not serious?"

"Indeed I am, though. I quite hated him for five minutes at least."

"But what did he do?"

"Why, he taunted me with being too civil to everybody, and it made me so angry. He said I pretended to take an interest in ever so many things, just to please people, when I didn't really care about them. And it isn't true, now, Katie, is it?"

"No, dear. He never could have said that. You must have misunderstood him."

"There, I knew you would say so. And if it were true, I'm sure it isn't wrong. When people talk to you, it is so easy to seem pleased and interested in what they are saying —and then they like you, and it is so pleasant to be liked. Now, Katie, do you ever snap people's noses off, or tell them you think them very foolish, and that you don't care, and that what there are saying is all of no consequence?"

"I, dear? I couldn't do it to save my life."

"Oh, I was sure you couldn't. And he may say what he will, but I am quite sure he would not have been pleased if we had not made ourselves pleasant to his friends."

"That's quite true. He has told me himself half a dozen times how delighted he was to see you so popular."

"And you too, Katie?"

"Oh yes. He was very well pleased with me. But it is you who have turned all the heads in the college, Mary. You are Queen of St. Ambrose beyond a doubt just now."

"No, no, Katie; not more than you at any rate."

"I say yes, yes, Mary. You will always be ten times as popular as I; some people have the gift of it; I wish I had. But why do you look so grave again?"

"Why, Katie, don't you see you are just saying over again, only in a different way, what your provoking cousin —I shall call him Mr. Brown, I think, in future—was telling me for my good in St. John's gardens. You saw how long we were away from you; well, he was lecturing me all the time, only think; and now you are going to tell it me all over again. But go on, dear; I sha'n't mind anything from you."

She put her arm round her cousin's waist, and looked up playfully into her face. Miss Winter saw at once that no great harm, perhaps some good, had been done in the passage of arms between her relatives.

"You made it all up," she said, smiling, "before we found you."

"Only just, though. He begged my pardon just at last, almost in a whisper, when you were quite close to us."

"And you granted it?"

"Yes, of course; but I don't know that I shall not recall it."

"I was sure you would be falling out before long, you got on so fast. But he isn't quite so easy to turn round your finger as you thought, Mary."

"Oh, I don't know that," said Mary, laughing; "you saw how humble he looked at last, and what good order he was in."

"Well, dear, it's time to think whether we shall go out again."

"Let me see; there's the last ball. What do you say?"

"Why, I'm afraid poor papa is too tired to take us, and I don't know with whom we could go. We ought to begin packing, too, I think."

"Very well. Let us have tea quietly at home."

"I will write a note to Tom to tell him. He has done his best for us, poor fellow, and we ought to consider him a little."

"Oh yes, and ask him and his friend Mr. Hardy to tea, as it is the last night."

"If you wish it I shall be very glad; they will amuse papa."

"Certainly, and then he will see that I bear him no malice. And now I will go and just do my hair."

"Very well; and we will pack after they leave. How strange home will seem after all this gaiety."

"Yes; we seem to have been here a month."

"I do hope we shall find all quiet at Englebourn. I am always afraid of some trouble there."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE END OF THE FRESHMAN'S YEAR.

On the morning after Commemoration, Oxford was in a bustle of departure. The play had been played the long vacation had begun, and visitors and members seemed equally anxious to be off. At the gates of the colleges groups of men in travelling dresses waited for the coaches, omnibuses, dog-carts, and all manner of vehicles, which were to carry them to the Great Western railway station at Steventon, or elsewhere, to all points of the compass. Porters passed in and out with portmanteaus, gun-cases, and baggage of all kinds, which they piled outside the gates, or carried off to "The Mitre" or "The Angel," under the vigorous and not too courteous orders of the owners. College servants

flitted round the groups to take last instructions, and, if so might be, to extract the balances of extortionate bills out of their departing masters. Dog fanciers were there also, holding terriers; and scouts from the cricketing grounds, with bats and pads under their arms; and ostlers, and men from the boats, all on the same errand of getting the last shilling out of their patrons—a fawning, obsequious crowd for the most part, with here and there a sturdy Briton who felt that he was only there for his due.

Through such a group, at the gate of St. Ambrose, Tom and Hardy passed soon after breakfast time, in cap and gown, which costume excited no small astonishment.

"Hullo, Brown, old fellow! ain't you off this morning?"

"No, I shall be up for a day or two yet."

"Wish you joy. I wouldn't be staying up over to-day for something.

"But you'll be at Henley to-morrow?" said Diogenes, confidently, who stood at the gate in boating coat and flannels, a big stick and knapsack, waiting for a companion, with whom he was going to walk to Henley.

"And at Lord's on Friday," said another. "It will be a famous match. Come and dine somewhere afterwards, and go to the Haymarket with us."

"You know the Leander are to be at Henley," put in Diogenes; "and Cambridge is very strong. There will be a splendid race for the cup, but Jervis thinks we are all right."

"Bother your eternal races; haven't we had enough of them?" said the Londoner. "You had much better come up to the little village at once, Brown, and stay there while the coin lasts."

"If I get away at all, it will be to Henley," said Tom.

"Of course, I knew that," said Diogenes, triumphantly; "our boat ought to be on for the ladies' plate. If only Jervis were not in the University crew! I thought you were to pull at Henley, Hardy?"

"I was asked to pull, but I couldn't manage the time with the schools coming on, and when the examinations were over it was too late. The crew were picked and half trained, and none of them have broken down."

"What! every one of them stood putting through the sieve? They must be a rare crew, then," said another.

"You're right," said Diogenes. "Oh, here you are at last," he added, as another man in flannels and knapsack

came out of college. "Well, good-bye all, and a pleasant vacation; we must be off, if we are to be in time to see our crew pull over the course to-night;" and the two marched off towards Magdalen Bridge.

"By Jove!" remarked a fast youth, in most elaborate toilette, looking after them, "fancy two fellows grinding off to Henley, five miles an hour, in this sun, when they might drop up to the metropolis by train in half the time? Isn't it marvellous?"

"I should like to be going with them," said Tom.

"Well, there's no accounting for tastes. Here's our coach."

"Good-bye, then;" and Tom shook hands, and, leaving the coach to get packed with portmanteaus, terriers, and undergraduates, he and Hardy walked off towards the High-street.

"So you're not going to-day?" Hardy said.

"No; two or three of my old schoolfellows are coming up to stand for scholarships, and I must be here to receive them. But it's very unlucky; I should have liked so to have been at Henley."

"Look, their carriage is already at the door," said Hardy, pointing up High-street, into which they now turned. There were a dozen postchaises and carriages loading in front of different houses in the street, and amongst them Mr. Winter's old-fashioned travelling barouche.

"So it is," said Tom; "that's some of uncle's fidgetiness; but he will be sure to dawdle at the last. Come along in."

"Don't you think I had better stay downstairs? It may seem intrusive."

"No, come along. Why, they asked you to come and see the last of them last night, didn't they?"

Hardy did not require any further urging to induce him to follow his inclination; so the two went up together. The breakfast things were still on the table, at which sat Miss Winter, in her bonnet, employed in examining the bill, with the assistance of Mary, who leant over her shoulder. She looked up as they entered.

"Oh! I'm so glad you are come. Poor Katie is so bothered, and I can't help her. Do look at the bill; is it all right?"

"Shall I, Katie?"

"Yes, please do. I don't see anything to object to, except, perhaps, the things I have marked. Do you think

we ought to be charged half a crown a day for the kitchen fire?"

"Fire in June! and you have never dined at home once?"

"No, but we have had tea several times."

"It is a regular swindle," said Tom, taking the bill and glancing at it. "Here, Hardy, come and help me cut down this precious total."

They sat down to the bill, the ladies willingly giving place. Mary tripped off to the glass to tie her bonnet.

"Now that is all right!" she said merrily; "why can't one go on without bills or horrid money?"

"Ah! why can't one?" said Tom, "that would suit most of our complaints. But where's uncle; has he seen the bill?"

"No; papa is in his room; he must not be worried, or the journey will be too much for him."

Here the ladies'-maid arrived, with a message that her father wished to see Miss Winter.

"Leave your money, Katie," said her cousin; "this is gentlemen's business, and Tom and Mr. Hardy will settle it all for us, I am sure."

Tom professed his entire willingness to accept the charge delighted at finding himself reinstated in his office of protector at Mary's suggestion. Had the landlord been one of his own tradesmen, or the bill his own bill, he might not have been so well pleased, but, as neither of these was the case, and he had Hardy to back him, he went into the matter with much vigor and discretion, and had the landlord up, made the proper deductions, and got the bill settled and receipted in a few minutes. Then he and Hardy addressed themselves to getting the carriage comfortably packed, and vied with one another in settling and stowing away in the most convenient places, the many little odds and ends which naturally accompany young ladies and invalids on their travels; in the course of which employment he managed to snatch a few words here and there with Mary, and satisfied himself that she bore him no ill-will for the events of the previous day.

At last all was ready for the start, and Tom reported the fact in the sitting-room. "Then I will go and fetch papa," said Miss Winter.

Tom's eyes met Mary's at the moment. He gave a slight shrug with his shoulders and said, as the door closed

after his cousin, "Really I have no patience with Uncle Robert, he leaves poor Katie to do everything."

"Yes; and how beautifully she does it all, without a word or, I believe, a thought of complaint! I could never be so patient."

"I think it is a pity. If Uncle Robert were obliged to exert himself it would be much better for him. Katie is only spoiling him and wearing herself out."

"Yes, it is very easy for you and me to think and say so. But he is her father; and then he is really an invalid. So she goes on devoting herself to him more and more, and feels she can never do too much for him."

"But if she believed it would be better for him to exert himself? I'm sure it is the truth. Couldn't you try to persuade her?"

"No, indeed; it would only worry her, and be so cruel. But then I am not used to give advice," she added, after a moment's pause, looking demurely at her gloves; "it might do good, perhaps, now, if you were to speak to her."

"You think me so well qualified, I suppose, after the specimen you had yesterday? Thank you; I have had enough of lecturing for the present."

"I am very much obliged to you, really, for what you said to me," said Mary, still looking at her gloves.

The subject was a very distasteful one to Tom. He looked at her for a moment to see whether she was laughing at him, and then broke it off abruptly—

"I hope you have enjoyed your visit?"

"Oh yes, so very much. I shall think of it all the summer."

"Where shall you be all the summer?" asked Tom.

"Not so very far from you. Papa has taken a house only eight miles from Englebourn, and Katie says you live within a day's drive of them."

"And shall you be there all the vacation?"

"Yes, and we hope to get Katie over often Could not you come and meet her? it would be so pleasant."

"But do you think I might? I don't know your father or mother."

"Oh, yes; papa and mamma are very kind, and will ask anybody I like. Besides, you are a cousin, you know."

"Only up at Oxford, I am afraid."

"Well now, you will see. We are going to have a great

archery party next month, and you shall have an invitation."

"Will you write it for me yourself?"

"Very likely; but why?"

"Don't you think I shall value a note in your hand more than—"

"Nonsense; now, remember your lecture—Oh, here are Uncle Robert and Katie."

Mr. Winter was very gracious, and thanked Tom for all his attentions. He had been very pleased, he said, to make his nephew's acquaintance again so pleasantly, and hoped he would come and pass a day or two at Englebourn in the vacation. In his sad state of health he could not do much to entertain a young man, but he could procure him some good fishing and shooting in the neighborhood. Tom assured his uncle that nothing would please him so much as a visit to Englebourn. Perhaps the remembrance of the distance between that parish and the place where Mary was to spend the summer may have added a little to his enthusiasm.

"I should have liked also to have thanked your friend for his hospitality," Mr. Winter went on. "I understood my daughter to say he was here."

"Yes, he was here just now," said Tom; "he must be below, I think."

"What, that good Mr. Hardy?" said Mary, who was looking out of the window; "there he is in the street. He has just helped Hopkins into the rumble, and handed her things to her just as if she were a duchess. She has been so cross all the morning and now she looks quite gracious."

"Then I think, papa, we had better start."

"Let me give you an arm down stairs, uncle," said Tom, and so he helped his uncle down to the carriage, the two young ladies following behind, and the landlord standing with obsequious bows at his shop door and looking as if he had never made an overcharge in his life.

While Mr. Winter was making his acknowledgments to Hardy, and being helped by him into the most comfortable seat in the carriage, Tom was making tender adieus to the two young ladies behind, and even succeeded in keeping a rose-bud which Mary was carrying, when they took their seats. She parted from it half-laughingly, and the post-boy cracked his whip and the barouche went lumbering along High-street. Hardy and Tom watched it until

it turned down St. Aldate's towards Folly-bridge, the latter waving his hand as it disappeared, and then they turned and strolled slowly away side by side in silence. The sight of all the other departures increased the uncomfortable, unsatisfied feeling which that of his own relatives had already produced in Tom's mind.

"Well, it isn't lively stopping up here when everybody is going, is it? What is one to do?"

"Oughtn't you to be looking after your friends who are coming up to try for the scholarships?"

"No, they won't be up till afternoon, by coach."

"Shall we go down to the river, then?"

"No, it would be miserable. Hullo, look here, what's up?"

The cause of Tom's astonishment was the appearance of the usual procession of university beadles carrying silver-headed maces, and escorting the Vice-Chancellor towards St. Mary's.

"Why, the bells are going for service; there must be a university sermon. Is it a saint's day?"

"Where's the congregation to come from? Why, half Oxford is off by this time, and those that are left won't want to be hearing sermons."

"Well, I don't know. A good many seem to be going. I wonder who is to preach?"

"I vote we go. It will help to pass the time."

Hardy agreed, and they followed the procession and went up into the gallery of St. Mary's. There was a very fair congregation in the body of the church, and the staffs of the colleges had not yet broken up, and even in the gallery the undergraduates mustered in some force. The restless feeling which had brought our hero there seemed to have had a like effect on most of the men who were for one reason or another unable to start on that day.

Tom looked steadily into his cap during the bidding prayer, and sat down composedly afterwards, expecting not to be much interested or benefitted, but comforted with the assurance that at any rate it would be almost luncheon time before he would be again thrown on his own resources. But he was mistaken in his expectations, and, before the preacher had been speaking for three minutes, was all attention. The sermon was upon the freedom of the Gospel, the power by which it bursts all bonds and lets the oppressed go free. Its burthen was, "Ye shall know the truth, and

the truth shall make you free." The preacher dwelt on many sides of these words; the freedom of nations, of societies, of universities, of the conscience of each individual man, were each glanced at in turn; and then, reminding his hearers of the end of the academical year, he went on—

"We have heard it said in the troubles and toils and temptations of the world,* 'O that I could begin life over again! oh that I could fall asleep, and wake up twelve, six, three months hence, and find my difficulties solved!' That which we may vainly wish elsewhere, by a happy Providence is furnished to us by the natural divisions of meeting and parting in this place. To every one of us, old and young, the long vacation on which we are now entering gives us a breathing space, and time to break the bonds which place and circumstance have woven round us during the year that is past. From all our petty cares, and confusions, and intrigues; from the dust and clatter of this huge machinery amidst which we labor and toil; from whatever cynical contempt of what is generous and devout; from whatever fanciful disregard of what is just and wise; from whatever gall of bitterness is secreted in our best motives; from whatever bonds of unequal dealings in which we may have entangled ourselves or others, we are now for a time set free. We stand on the edge of a river which shall for a time at least sweep them away; that ancient river, the Kishon, the river of fresh thoughts, and fresh scenes, and fresh feelings, and fresh hopes: one surely amongst the blessed means whereby God's free and loving grace works out our deliverance, our redemption from evil, and renews the strength of each succeeding year, so that 'we may mount up again as eagles, may run and not be weary, may walk and not faint.'

"And, if turning to the younger part of my hearers, I may still more directly apply this general lesson to them. Is there no one who, in some shape or other, does not feel the bondage of which I have been speaking? He has something on his conscience; he has something on his mind; extravagance, sin, debt, falsehood. Every morning

* This quotation is from the sermon preached by Dr. Stanley before the University, on Act Sunday, 1859 (published by J. H. Parker, of Oxford). I hope the distinguished professor whose words they are will pardon the liberty I have taken in quoting them. No words of my own could have given so vividly what I wanted to say.

in the first few minutes after waking, it is the first thought that occurs to him; he drives it away in the day; he drives it off by recklessness, which only binds it more and more closely round him. Is there any one who has ever felt, who is at this moment feeling this grievous burden? What is the deliverance? How shall he set himself free? In what special way does the redemption of Christ, the free grace of God, present itself to him? There is at least one way clear and simple. He knows it better than any one can tell him. It is those same words which I used with another purpose. 'The truth shall make him free.' It is to tell the truth to his friend, to his parent, to any one, whosoever it be, from whom he is concealing that which he ought to make known. One word of open, frank disclosure—one resolution to act sincerely and honestly by himself and others—one ray of truth let into that dark corner will indeed set the whole man free.

"*Liberavi animam meam.* 'I have delivered my soul.' What a faithful expression is this of the relief, the deliverance effected by one strong effort of will in one moment of time. 'I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.' So we heard the prodigal's confession this morning. So may the thought well spring up in the minds of any who in the course of this last year have wandered into sin, have found themselves beset with evil habits of wicked idleness, of wretched self-indulgence. Now that you are indeed in the literal sense of the word about to rise and go to your father, now that you will be able to shake off the bondage of bad companionship, now that the whole length of this long absence will roll between you and the past—take a long breath, break off the yoke of your sin, of your fault, of your wrong doing, of your folly, of your perverseness, of your pride, of your vanity, of your weakness; break it off by truth, break it off by one stout effort, in one steadfast prayer; break it off by innocent and free enjoyment; break it off by honest work. Put your 'hand to the nail and your right hand to the workman's hammer;' strike through the enemy which has ensnared you, pierce and strike him through and through. However powerful he seems, 'at your feet he will bow, he will fall, he will lie down; at your feet he will bow and fall, and where he bows, there will he rise up no more. So let all thine enemies perish, O

Lord; but let them that love Thee be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might.'"

The two friends separated themselves from the crowd in the porch and walked away, side by side, towards their college.

"Well, that wasn't a bad move of ours. It is worth something to hear a man preach that sort of doctrine," said Hardy.

"How does he get to know it all?" said Tom, meditatively.

"All what? I don't see your puzzle."

"Why, all sorts of things that are in a fellow's mind—what he thinks about the first thing in the morning, for instance."

"Pretty much like the rest of us, I take it; by looking at home. You don't suppose university preachers are unlike you and me."

"Well, I don't know. Now do you think he ever had anything on his mind that was always coming up and plaguing him, and which he never told to anybody?"

"Yes, I should think so; most of us must have had."

"Have you?"

"Ay, often and often."

"And you think his remedy the right one?"

"The only one. Make a clean breast of it and the sting is gone. There's a great deal to be done afterwards, of course; but there can be no question about step No. 1."

"Did you ever owe a hundred pounds that you couldn't pay?" said Tom, with a sudden effort; and his secret had hardly passed his lips before he felt a relief which surprised himself.

"My dear fellow," said Hardy, stopping in the street "you don't mean to say you are speaking of yourself?"

"I do, though," said Tom, "and it has been on my mind ever since Easter term, and has spoilt my temper and everything—that and something else that you know of. You must have seen me getting more and more ill-tempered I'm sure. And I have thought of it the first thing in the morning and the last thing at night; and tried to drive the thought away just as he said one did in his sermon. By Jove, I thought he knew all about it, for he looked right at me just when he came to that place."

"But, Brown, how do you mean you owe a hundred pounds? You havn't read much certainly; but you haven't

hunted, or gambled, or tailored much, or gone into any other extravagant folly. You must be dreaming."

"Am I though? Come up to my rooms and I'll tell you all about it; I feel better already now I've let it out. I'll send over for your commons, and we'll have some lunch."

Hardy followed his friend in much trouble of mind, considering in himself whether with the remainder of his savings he could not make up the sum which Tom had named. Fortunately for both of them a short calculation showed him that he could not, and he gave up the idea of delivering his friend in this summary manner with a sigh. He remained closeted with Tom for an hour, and then came out, looking serious still, but not uncomfortable, and went down to the river. He sculled down to Sandford, bathed in the lasher, and returned in time for chapel. He stayed outside afterwards, and Tom came up to him and seized his arm.

"I've done it old fellow," he said; "look here;" and produced a letter. Hardy glanced at the direction, and saw that it was to his father.

"Come along and post it," said Tom, "and then I shall feel all right."

They walked off quickly to the post-office and dropped the letter into the box.

"There," he said, as it disappeared, "*liberavi animam meam.* I owe the preacher a good turn for that; I've a good mind to write and thank him. Fancy the poor old governor's face to-morrow at breakfast!"

"Well, you seem to take it easy enough now," said Hardy.

"I can't help it. I tell you I haven't felt so jolly this two months. What a fool I was not to have done it before. After all, now I come to think of it, I can pay it myself, at least as soon as I am of age, for I know I've some money, a legacy or something, coming to me then. But that isn't what I care about now."

"I'm very glad though that you have the money of your own."

"Yes, but the having told it is all the comfort. Come along, and let's see whether these boys are come. The old Pig ought to be in by this time, and I want them to dine in hall. It's only ten months since I came up on it to matriculate, and it seems twenty years. But I'm going to be a boy again for to-night; you'll see if I'm not."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE LONG VACATION LETTER-BAG.

"*June* 24, 184—.

"My dear Tom,—Your letter came to hand this morning, and it has, of course, given your mother and me much pain. It is not the money that we care about, but that our son should have deliberately undertaken, or pretended to undertake, what he must have known at the time he could not perform himself.

"I have written to my bankers to pay 100*l.* at once to your account at the Oxford Bank. I have also requested my solicitor to go over to Oxford, and he will probably call on you the day after you receive this. You say that this person who holds your note of hand is now in Oxford. You will see him in the presence of my solicitor, to whom you will hand the note when you have recovered it. I shall consider afterwards what further steps will have to be taken in the matter.

"You will not be of age for a year. It will be time enough then to determine whether you will repay the balance of this money out of the legacy to which you will be entitled under your grandfather's will. In the meantime, I shall deduct at the rate of 50*l.* a year from your allowance, and I shall hold your bond in honor to reduce your expenditure by this amount. You are no longer a boy, and one of the first duties which a man owes to his friends and to society is to live within his income.

"I make this advance to you on two conditions. First that you will never again put your hand to a note or bill in a transaction of this kind. If you have money, lend it or spend it. You may lend or spend foolishly, but that is not the point here; at any rate you are dealing with what is your own. But in transactions of this kind you are dealing with what is not your own. A gentleman should shrink from the possibility of having to come on others, even on his own father, for the fulfilment of his obligations, as he would from a lie. I would sooner see a son of mine in his grave than crawling on through life a slave to wants and habits which he must gratify at other people's expense.

"My second condition is, that you put an end to your acquaintance with these two gentlemen who have led you into this scrape, and have divided the proceeds of your joint note between them. They are both your seniors in standing, you say, and they appear to be familiar with this plan of raising money at the expense of other people. The plain English word for such doings is, swindling. What pains me most is, that you have become intimate with young men of this kind. I am not sure that it will not be my duty to lay the whole matter before the authorities of the college. You do not mention their names, and I respect the feeling which has led you not to mention them. I shall know them quite soon enough through my solicitor, who will forward me a copy of the note of hand and signatures in due course.

"Your letter makes general allusion to other matters; and I gather from it that you are dissatisfied with the manner in which you have spent your first year at Oxford. I do not ask for specific confessions, which you seem inclined to offer me; in fact, I would sooner not have them, unless there is any other matter in which you want assistance or advice from me. I know from experience that Oxford is a place full of temptation of all kinds, offered to young men at the most critical time of their lives. Knowing this, I have deliberately accepted the responsibility of sending you there, and I do not repent it. I am glad that you are dissatisfied with your first year. If you had not been I should have felt much more anxious about your second. Let bygones be bygones between you and me. You know where to go for strength, and to make confessions which no human ear should hear, for no human judgment can weigh the cause. The secret places of a man's heart are for himself and God. Your mother sends her love.

"I am, ever your affectionate father,

"JOHN BROWN."

June 26th, 184—.

"MY DEAR BOY,—I am not sorry that you have taken my last letter as you have done. It is quite right to be sensitive on these points, and it will have done you no harm to have fancied for forty-eight hours that you had in my judgment lost caste as a gentleman. But now I am very glad to be able to ease your mind on this point. You have done

a very foolish thing; but it is only the habit, and the getting others to bind themselves, and not the doing it oneself for others, which is disgraceful. You are going to pay honorably for your folly, and will owe me neither thanks nor money in the transaction. I have chosen my own terms for repayment, which you have accepted, and so the financial question is disposed of.

"I have considered what you say as to your companions —friends I will not call them—and will promise you not to take any further steps, or to mention the subject to any one. But I must insist on my second condition, that you avoid all further intimacy with them. I do not mean that you are to cut them, or do anything that will attract attention. But, no more intimacy.

"And now, my dear boy, as to the rest of your letter. Mine must indeed have failed to express my meaning. God forbid that there should not be the most perfect confidence between us. There is nothing which I desire or value more. I only question whether special confessions will conduce to it. My experience is against them. I almost doubt whether they can be perfectly honest between man and man; and, taking into account the difference of our ages, it seems to be much more likely that we should misunderstand one another. But having said this, I leave it to you to follow your own conscience in the matter. If there is any burthen which I can help you to bear, it will be my greatest pleasure, as it is my duty, to do it. So now, say what you please, or say no more. If you speak, it will be to one who has felt and remembers a young man's trials.

"We hope you will be able to come home to-morrow, or the next day, at latest. Your mother is longing to see you, and I should be glad to have you here a day or two before the assizes, which are held next week. I should rather like you to accompany me to them, as it will give me the opportunity of introducing you to my brother magistrates from other parts of the county, whom you are not likely to meet elsewhere, and it is a good thing for a young man to know his own county well.

"The cricket club is very flourishing you will be glad to hear, and they have put off their best matches till your return; so you are in great request, you see. I am told that the fishing is very good this year, and am promised several days for you in the club water.

"September is a long way off, but there is nothing like being beforehand; I have put your name down for a license; and it is time you should have a good gun of your own; so I have ordered one for you from a man who has lately settled in the county. He was Purdy's foreman, with whom I used to build, and, I can see, understands his business thoroughly. His locks are as good as any I have ever seen. I have told him to make the stock rather longer, and not quite so straight as that of my old double with which you shot last year. I think I remember you criticized my weapon on these points; but there will be time for you to alter the details after you get home, if you disapprove of my orders. It will be more satisfactory if it is built under your own eye.

"If you continue in the mind for a month's reading with your friend Mr. Hardy, we will arrange it towards the end of the vacation: but would he not come here? From what you say we should very much like to know him. Pray ask him from me whether he will pass the last month of the vacation here, reading with you. I should like you to be his first regular pupil. Of course this will be my affair. And now, God bless you, and come home as soon as you can. Your mother sends her best love.

"Ever your most affectionate,

"JOHN BROWN."

"ENGLEBOURN RECTORY,

"*June 28th, 184—.*

"DEAREST MARY:—How good of you to write to me so soon! Your letter has come like a gleam of sunshine. I am in the midst of worries already. Indeed, as you know, I could never quite throw off the fear of what might be happening here, while we were enjoying ourselves at Oxford, and it has all turned out even worse than I expected. I shall never be able to go away again in comfort, I think. And yet, if I had been here, I don't know that I could have done any good. It is so very sad that poor papa is unable to attend to his magistrate's business, and he has been worse than usual, quite laid up in fact, since our return. There is no other magistrate—not even a gentleman in the place, as you know, except the curate: and they will not listen to him, even if he would interfere in their quarrels. But he says he will not meddle with secular matters; and, poor

man, I cannot blame him, for it is very easy and sad and wearing to be mixed up in it all.

"But now I must tell you all my troubles. You remember the men whom we saw mowing together just before we went to Oxford. Betty Winburn's son was one of them, and I am afraid the rest are not at all good company for him. When they had finished papa's hay, they went to mow for Farmer Tester. You must remember him, dear, I am sure; the tall, gaunt man, with heavy, thick lips and a broken nose, and the top of his head quite flat, as if it had been cut off a little above his eyebrows. He is a very miserly man, and a hard master; at least all the poor people tell me so, and he looks cruel. I have always been afraid of him, and disliked him, for I remember as a child hearing papa complain how troublesome he was in the vestry; and except old Simon, who, I believe, only does it from perverseness, I have never heard anybody speak well of him.

"The first day that the men went to mow for farmer Tester, he gave them sour beer to drink. You see, dear, they bargained to mow for so much money and their beer. They were very discontented at this, and they lost a good deal of time going to complain to him about it, and they had high words with him.

"The men said the beer wasn't fit for pigs, and the farmer said it was quite good enough 'for such as they,' and if they didn't like his beer they might buy their own. In the evening, too, he came down and complained that the mowing was bad, and then there were more high words, for the men are very jealous about their work. However they went to work as usual the next morning, and all might have gone off quietly, but in the day farmer Tester found two pigs in his turnip field which adjoins the common, and had them put in the pound. One of these pigs belonged to Betty Winburn's son, and the other to one of the men who was mowing with him; so, when they came home at night, they found what had happened.

"The constable is our pound-keeper, the little man who amused you so much; he plays the bass-viol in church. When he puts any beasts into the pound he cuts a stick in two and gives one piece to the person who brings the beasts, and keeps the other himself; and the owner of the beasts has to bring the other end of the stick to him before he can let them out. Therefore, the owner, you see, must go to the person who has pounded his beasts, and make a bargain

with him for payment of the damage which has been done, and so get back the other end of the stick, which they call the 'tally,' to produce to the pound-keeper.

"Well, the men went off to the constable's when they heard their pigs were pounded, to find who had the 'tally,' and, when they found it was farmer Tester, they went in a body to his house to remonstrate with him, and learn what he set the damages at. The farmer used dreadful language to them, I hear, and said they weren't fit to have pigs, and must pay half a crown for each pig, before they could have the 'tally;' and the men irritated him by telling him that his fences were a shame to the parish, because he was too stingy to have them mended, and that the pigs couldn't have found half a crown's worth of turnips in the whole field, for he never put any manure on it except what he could get off the road, which ought to belong to the poor. At last the farmer drove them away saying he should stop the money out of the price he was to pay for their mowing.

"Then there was very near being a riot in the parish; for some of the men are very reckless people, and they went in the evening and blew horns and beat kettles before his house, till the constable, who has behaved very well, persuaded them to go away.

"In the morning one of the pigs had been taken out of the pound; not Betty's son's, I am glad to say—for no doubt it was very wrong of the men to take it out. The farmer was furious, and went with the constable in the morning to find the pig, but they could hear nothing of it anywhere. James Pope, the man to whom it belonged, only laughed at them, and said he never could keep his pig in himself, because it was grandson to one of the acting pigs that went about to the fairs, and all the pigs of that family took to climbing naturally; so his pig must have climbed out of the pound. This of course was all a story; the men had lifted the pig out of the pound, and then killed it, so that the farmer might not find it, and sold the meat cheap all over the parish. Betty went to the farmer that morning and paid the half crown, and got her son's pig out before he came home; but farmer Tester stopped the other half crown out of the men's wages, which made matters worse than ever.

"The day that we were in the Theatre at Oxford, farmer Tester was away at one of the markets. He turns his pig cattle out to graze on the common, which the poor peo-

ple say he has no right to do, and in the afternoon a pony of his got into the allotments, and Betty's son caught it, and took it to the constable, and had it put in the pound. The constable tried to persuade him not to do it, but it was of no use; and so, when farmer Tester came home, he found that his turn had come. I am afraid that he was not sober, for I hear that he behaved dreadfully both to the constable and to Betty's son, and, when he found that he could not frighten them, he declared he would have the law of them if it cost him twenty pounds. So in the morning he went to fetch his lawyer, and when we got home you can fancy what a scene it was.

"You remember how poorly papa was when you left us at Lambourn. By the time we got home he was quite knocked up, and so nervous that he was fit for nothing except to have a quiet cup of tea in his own room. I was sure as we drove up the street, there was something the matter. The ostler was watching outside the Red Lion, and ran in as soon as we came in sight; and, as we passed the door, out came farmer Tester, looking very flushed in the face, and carrying his great iron-handled whip, and a person with him, who I found was his lawyer, and they marched after the carriage. Then the constable was standing at his door too, and he came after us, and there was a group of men outside the rectory gate. We had not been in the house five minutes before a servant came in to say that farmer Tester and a gentlemen wanted to see papa on particular business. Papa sent out word that he was very unwell, and that it was not the proper time to come on business; he would see them the next day at twelve o'clock. But they would not go away, and then papa asked me to go out and see them. You can fancy how disagreeable it was; and I was so angry with them for coming, when they knew how nervous papa is after a journey, that I could not have patience to persuade them to leave; and so at last they made poor papa see them after all.

"He was lying on a sofa, and quite unfit to cope with a hard bad man like farmer Tester, and a fluent plausible lawyer. They told their story all their own way, and the farmer declared that the man had tempted the pony into the allotment with corn. And the lawyer said that the constable had no right to keep the pony in the pound, that he was liable to all sorts of punishments. They wanted papa to make an order at once for the pound to be opened, and

hink he would have done so, but I asked him in a whisper o send for the constable, and hear what he had to say. The onstable was waiting in the kitchen, so he came in in a minute. You can't think how well he behaved; I have uite forgiven him all his obstinacy about the singing. He old the whole story about the pigs, and how farmer Tester ad stopped money out of the men's wages. And when he lawyer tried to frighten him, he answered him quite oldly, that he mightn't know so much about the law, but e knew what was always the custom long before his time t Englebourn about the pound, and if farmer Tester vanted his beast out, he must bring the 'tally' like another nan. Then the lawyer appealed to papa about the law, nd said how absurd it was, and that if such a custom were o be upheld, the man who had the tally might charge 100*l.* or the damage. And poor papa looked through his law ooks, and could find nothing about it at all; and while he vas doing it farmer Tester began to abuse the constable, nd said he sided with all the good-for-nothing fellows in he parish, and that bad blood would come of it. But the onstable quite fired up at that, and told him that it was uch as he who made bad blood in the parish, and that oor folks had their rights as well as their betters, and hould have them as long as he was constable. If he got apa's order to open the pound, he supposed he must do it, nd 'twas not for him to say what was law, but Henry Vinburn had had to get the 'tally' for his pig from farmer ester, and what was fair for one was fair for all.

"I was afraid papa would have made the order, but the awyer said something at last which made him take the ther side. So he settled that the farmer should pay five illings for the 'tally,' which was what he had taken from Betty and had stopped out of the wages, and that was the nly order he would make, and the lawyer might do what he leased about it. The constable seemed satisfied with this, nd undertook to take the money down to Harry Winburn, r farmer Tester declared he would sooner let the pony arve than go himself. And so papa got rid of them after n hour and more of this talk. The lawyer and farmer ester went away grumbling and very angry to the Red ion. I was very anxious to hear how the matter ended; I went after the constable to ask him to come back and e me when he had settled it all, and about nine o'clock he me. He had had a very hard job to get Harry Winburn

to take the money, and give up the 'tally.' The men said that, if farmer Tester could make them pay half-a-crown for a pig in his turnips, which were no bigger than raddishes, he ought to pay ten shillings at least for his pony trampling down their corn, which was half grown; and I couldn't help thinking this seemed very reasonable. In the end, however, the constable had persuaded them to take the money, and so the pony was let out.

"I told him how pleased I was at the way he had behaved, but the little man didn't seem quite satisfied himself. He should have liked to have given the lawyer a piece of his mind, he said, only he was no scholar; 'but I've a got all the feelin's of a man, miss, though I medn't have the ways o' bringin' on 'em out.' You see I'm quite coming round to your opinion about him. But when I said that I hoped all the trouble was over, he shook his head and he seems to think that the men will not forget it, and that some of the wild ones will be trying to pay farmer Tester out in the winter nights, and I could see he was very anxious about Harry Winburn; so I promised him to go and see Betty.

"I went down to her cottage yesterday, and found her very low, poor old soul, about her son. She has had a bad attack again, and I am afraid her heart is not right. She will not live long if she has much to make her anxious, and how is that to be avoided? For her son's courting is all going wrong, she can see, though he will not tell her anything about it; but he gets more moody and restless, she says, and don't take a pride in anything, not even in his flowers or his allotment; and he takes to going about, more and more every day, with these men, who will be sure to lead him into trouble.

"After I left her, I walked up to the Hawk's Lynch, to see whether the view and the air would not do me good. And it did do me a great deal of good, dear, and I thought of you, and when I should see your bright face and hear your happy laugh again. The village looked so pretty and peaceful. I could hardly believe, while I was up there, that there were all these miserable quarrels and heartburnings going on in it. I suppose they go on everywhere, but one can't help feeling as if there was something specially hard in those which come under one's own eyes, and touch one's self. And then they are so frivolous, and everything might go on so comfortably if people would only be reasonable

I ought to have been a man, I am sure, and then I might, perhaps, be able to do more, and should have more influence. If poor papa were only well and strong!

"But, dear, I shall tire you with all these long histories and complainings. I have run on till I have no room left for anything else; but you can't think what a comfort it is to me to write it all to you, for I have no one to tell it to. I feel so much better, and more cheerful since I sat down to write this. You must give my dear love to uncle and aunt, and let me hear from you again whenever you have time. If you could come over again and stay for a few days it would be very kind; but I must not press it, as there is nothing to attract you here, only we might talk over all that we did and saw at Oxford.—Ever, dearest Mary, your affectionate cousin,

"Katie.

"P. S.—I should like to have the pattern of the jacket you wore the last day at Oxford. Could you cut it out in thin paper and send it in your next?"

"*July*—, 184—.

"My dear Brown,—I was very glad to see your hand, and to hear such flourishing accounts of your vacation doings. You won't get any like announcement of me, for cricket has not yet come so far west as this, at least not to settle. We have a few pioneers and squatters in the villages; but, I am sorry to say, nothing yet like matches between the elevens of districts. Neighbors we have none, except the rector; so I have plenty of spare time, some of which I feel greatly disposed to devote to you; and I hope you wont find me too tedious to read.

"It is very kind of your father to wish that you should be my first pupil, and to propose that I should spend the last month of this vacation with you in Berkshire. But I do not like to give up a whole month. My father is getting old and infirm, and I can see that it would be a great trial to him, although he urges it, and is always telling me not to let him keep me at home. What do you say to meeting me half way? I mean, that you should come here for half of the time, and then that I should return with you for the last fortnight of the vacation. This I could manage perfectly.

"But you cannot in any case be my first pupil; for not to mention that I have been as you know, teaching for some years, I have a pupil here, at this minute. You are not likely to guess who it is, though you know him well enough —perhaps I should say too well—so, in a word, it is Blake. I had not been at home three days before I got a letter from him, asking me to take him, and putting it in such a way that I couldn't refuse. I would sooner not have had him, as I had already got out of taking a reading party with some trouble, and felt inclined to enjoy myself here in dignified idleness till next term. But what can you do when a man puts it to you as a great personal favor, &c. &c.? So I wrote to accept. You may imagine my disgust a day or two afterwards, at getting a letter from an uncle of his some official person in London apparently, treating the whole matter in a *business* point of view, and me as if I were a training groom. He is good enough to suggest a stimulant to me in the shape of extra pay and his future patronage in the event of his nephew's taking a first in Michaelmas term. If I had received this letter before, I think it would have turned the scale, and I should have refused. But the thing was done, and Blake isn't fairly responsible for his relative's views.

"So here he has been for a fortnight. He took a lodging in the village at first; but of course my dear old father's ideas of hospitality were shocked at this, and here he is, our inmate.

"He reads fiercely by fits and starts. A feeling of personal hatred against the examiners seems to urge him on more than any other motive; but this will not be strong enough to keep him to regular work, and without regular work he won't do, notwithstanding all his cleverness, and he is a marvellously clever fellow. So the first thing I have to do is to get him steadily to the collar, and how to do it is a pretty particular puzzle. For he hasn't a grain of enthusiasm in his composition, nor any power, as far as I can see, of throwing himself into the times and scenes of which he is reading. The philosophy of Greece and the history of Rome are matters of perfect indifference to him—to be got up by catch-words and dates for examination and nothing more. I don't think he would care a straw if Socrates had never lived, or Hannibal had destroyed Rome. The greatest names and deeds of the old world are just so many dead counters to him—the Jewish just as much as the rest.

tried him with the story of the attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to conquer the Jews, and the glorious rising of all that was living in the Holy Land under the Macabees. Not a bit of it; I couldn't get a spark out of him. He wouldn't even read the story because it is in the Apocrypha, and so, as he said, the d—d examiners couldn't ask him anything about it in the schools.

Then his sense of duty is quiet undeveloped. He has no notion of going on doing anything disagreeable because he ought. So here I am at fault again. Ambition he has in abundance; in fact so strongly, that very likely it may in the end pull him through, and make him work hard enough for his Oxford purposes at any rate. But it wants repressing rather than encouragement, and I certainly shan't appeal to it.

"You will begin to think I dislike him and want to get rid of him, but it isn't the case. You know what a good temper he has, and how remarkably well he talks; so he makes himself very pleasant, and my father evidently enjoys his company; and then to be in constant intercourse with a subtle intellect like his, is pleasantly exciting, and and keeps one alive and at high pressure, though one can't help always wishing that it had a little heat in it. You would be immensely amused if you could drop in on us.

"I think I have told you or you must have seen it for yourself, that my father's principles are true blue, as becomes a sailor of the time of the great war, while his instincts and practice are liberal in the extreme. Our rector, on the contrary, is liberal in principles, but an aristocrat of the aristocrats in instinct and practice. They are always ready enough therefore to do battle, and Blake delights in the war, and fans it and takes part in it as a sort of free lance, laying little logical pitfalls for the combatants alternately, with that deferential manner of his. He gets some sort of intellectual pleasure, I suppose, out of seeing where they ought to tumble in; for tumble in they don't, but clear his pit-falls in their stride—at least my father does—quite innocent of having neglected to distribute his middle term; and the rector, if he has some inkling of these traps, brushes them aside, and disdains to spend powder on any one but his old adversary and friend. I employ myself in trying to come down ruthlessly on Blake himself; and so we spend our evenings after dinner, which comes off at the primitive hour of five. We used to dine at three, but my father has

comformed now to college hours. If the rector does not come, instead of argumentative talk, we get stories out of my father. In the morning we bathe, and boat, and read. So, you see, he and I have plenty of one another's company, and it is certainly odd that we get on so well with so very few points of sympathy. But, luckily, besides his good temper and cleverness, he has plenty of humor. On the whole, I think we shall rub through the two months which he is to spend here without getting to hate one another, though there is little chance of our becoming friends. Besides putting some history and science into him (scholarship he does not need), I shall be satisfied if I can make him give up his use of the pronoun 'you' before he goes. In talking of the corn laws, or foreign policy, or India, or any other political subject, however interesting, he never will identify himself as an Englishman; and 'you do this," or 'you expect that' is for ever in his mouth, speaking of his own countrymen. I believe if the French were to land to-morrow on Portland, he would comment on our attempts to dislodge them as if he had no concern with the business except as a looker-on.

"You will think all this rather a slow return for your jolly gossiping letter, full of cricket, archery, fishing, and I know not what pleasant goings-on. But what is one to do? one can only write about what is one's subject of interest for the time being, and Blake stands in that relation to me just now. I should prefer it otherwise, but *si on n'a pas ce qu'on aime il faut aimer ce qu'on a.* I have no incident to relate; these parts get on without incidents somehow, and without society. I wish there were some, particularly ladies' society. I break the tenth commandment constantly, thinking of Commemoration, and that you are within a ride of Miss Winter and her cousin. When you see them next, pray present my respectful compliments. It is a sort of consolation to think that one may cross their fancy for a moment and be remembered as part of a picture which gives them pleasure. With such piece of sentiment I may as well shut up. Don't you forget my message now, and—

"Believe me, ever yours most truly,

"JOHN HARDY.

"P.S.—I mean to speak to Blake, when I get a chance, of that wretched debt which you have paid, unless you ob-

ject. I should think better of him if he seemed more uncomfortable about his affairs. After all he may be more so than I think, for he is very reserved on such subjects."

"ENGLEBOURN RECTORY,

"*July*, 184—.

"DEAREST MARY.—I send the coachman with this note in order that you may not be anxious about me. I have just returned from poor Betty Winburn's cottage to write it. She is very very ill, and I do not think can last out more than a day or two; and she seems to cling to me so that I cannot have the heart to leave her. Indeed, if I could make up my mind to do it, I should never get her poor white eager face out of my head all day, so that I should be very bad company, and quite out of place at your party, making everybody melancholy and uncomfortable who came near me. So, dear, I am not coming. Of course it is a great disappointment. I had set my heart on being with you, and enjoying it all thoroughly; and even at breakfast this morning knew of nothing to hinder me. My dress is actually lying on the bed at this minute, and it looks very pretty, especially the jacket like yours, which I and Hopkins have managed to make up from the pattern you sent, though you forgot the sleeves, which made it rather hard to do. Ah, well; it is no use to think of how pleasant things would have been which one cannot have. You must write me an account of how it all went off, dear; or perhaps you can manage to get over here before long to tell me.

"I must now go back to poor Betty. She is such a faithful, patient old thing, and has been such a good woman all her life that there is nothing painful in being by her now, and one feels sure that it will be much happier and better for her to be at rest. If she could only feel comfortable about her son, I am sure she would think so herself. Oh, I forgot to say that her attack was brought on by the shock of hearing that he had been summoned for an assault. Farmer Tester's son, a young man about his own age, has, it seems, been of late waylaying Simon's daughter and making love to her. It is so very hard to make out the truth in matters of this kind. Hopkins says she is a dressed-up little minx who runs after all the young men in the parish; but really, from what I see and hear from other persons, I think she

is a good girl enough. Even Betty, who looks on her as the cause of most of her own trouble, has never said a word to make me think that she is at all a light person, or more fond of admiration than any other good-looking girl in the parish.

"But those Testers are a very wicked set. You cannot think what a misfortune it is in a place like this to have these rich families with estates of their own, in which the young men begin to think themselves above the common farmers. They ape the gentlemen, and give themselves great airs, but of course no gentleman will associate with them, as they are quite uneducated; and the consequence is that they live a great deal at home, and give themselves up to all kinds of wickedness. This young Tester is one of these. His father is a very bad old man, and does a great deal of harm here; and the son is following in his steps, and is quite as bad, or worse. So you see that I shall not easily believe that Harry Winburn has been much in the wrong. However, all I know of it at present is that young Tester was beaten by Harry yesterday evening in the village street, and that they came to papa at once for a summons.

"Oh, here is the coachman ready to start; so I must conclude, dear, and go back to my patient. I shall often think of you during the day. I am sure you will have a charming party. With best love to all, believe me, ever dearest,

"Your most affectionate

"KATIE.

"P. S.—I am very glad that uncle and aunt take to Tom, and that he is staying with you for some days. You will find him very useful in making the party go off well, I am sure."

CHAPTER XXX.

AMUSEMENTS AT BARTON MANOR.

"A LETTER, Miss, from Englebourn," said a footman, coming up to Mary with the note given at the end of the last chapter, on a waiter. She took it and tore it open; and while she is reading it, the reader may be introduced to the

place and company in which we find her. The scene is a large old-fashioned square brick house, backed by fine trees, in the tops of which the rooks live, and the jackdaws and starlings in the many holes which time has worn in the old trunks; but they are all away on this fine summer morning, seeking their meal and enjoying themselves in the neighboring fields. In the front of the house is a pretty flower-garden, separated by a haw-haw from a large pasture, sloping southwards gently down to a stream, which glides along through water-cress and willow beds to join the Kennet. The beasts have all been driven off, and on the upper part of the field, nearest the house, two men are fixing up a third pair of targets on the rich short grass. A large tent is pitched near the archery-ground, to hold quivers and bow-cases, and luncheon, and to shelter lookers-on from the mid-day sun. Beyond the brook a pleasant, well-timbered, country lies, with high chalk-downs for an horizon, ending in Marlborough hill, faint and blue in the west. This is the place which Mary's father has taken for the summer and autumn, and where she is fast becoming the pet of the neighborhood.

It will not perhaps surprise our readers to find that our hero has managed to find his way to Barton Manor in the second week of the vacation, and having made the most of his opportunities, is acknowledged as a cousin by Mr. and Mrs. Porter. Their boys are at home for the holidays, and Mr. Porter's great wish is that they should get used to the country in their summer holidays. And as they have spent most of their childhood and boyhood in London, to which he has been tied pretty closely hitherto, this is a great opportunity. The boys only wanted a preceptor, and Tom presented himself at the right moment, and soon became the hero of Charley and Neddy Porter. He taught them to throw flies and bait crawfish nets, to bat-fowl, and ferret for rabbits, and to saddle and ride their ponies, besides getting up games of cricket in the spare evenings, which kept him away from Mr. Porter's dinner-table. This last piece of self-denial, as he considered it, quite won over that gentleman, who agreed with his wife that Tom was just the sort of companion they would like for the boys, and so the house was thrown open to him.

The boys were always clamouring for him when he was away, and making their mother write off to press him to come again; which he, being a very good-natured young

man, and particularly fond of boys, was ready enough to do. So this was the third visit he had paid in a month.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown wondered a little that he should be so very fond of the young Porters, who were good boys enough, but very much like other boys of thirteen and fifteen, of whom there were several in the neighborhood. He had indeed just mentioned an elder sister, but so casually that their attention had not been drawn to the fact, which had almost slipped out of their memories. On the other hand, Tom seemed so completely to identify himself with the boys and their pursuits, that it never occurred to their father and mother, who were doatingly fond of them, that, after all, they might not be the only attraction. Mary seemed to take very little notice of him, and went on with her own pursuits much as usual. It was true that she liked keeping the score at cricket, and coming to look at them fishing or rabbiting in her walks; but all that was very natural. It is a curious and merciful dispensation of Providence that most fathers and mothers seem never to be capable of remembering their own experience, and will probably go on till the end of time thinking of their sons of twenty and daughters of sixteen or seventeen as mere children, who may be allowed to run about together as much as they please. And, where it is otherwise, the results are not very different, for their are certain mysterious ways of holding intercourse implanted in the youth of both sexes, against which no vigilance can avail.

So on this, her great fete day, Tom had been helping Mary all the morning in dressing the rooms with flowers, and arranging all the details—where people were to sit at cold dinner; how to find the proper number of seats; how the dining-room was to be cleared in time for dancing when the dew began to fall. In all which matters there were many obvious occasions for those little attentions which are much valued by persons in like situations; and Tom was not sorry that the boys had voted the whole preparations a bore, and had gone off to the brook to 'gropple' in the bank for crayfish till the shooting began. The arrival of the note had been the first *contre-temps* of the morning, and they were now expecting guests to arrive every minute.

"What is the matter? No bad news I hope," he said, seeing her vexed expression.

"Why, Katie can't come. I declare I could sit down and

cry. I sha'n't enjoy the party a bit now, and I wish it were all over."

"I am sure Katie would be very unhappy if she thought you were going to spoil your day's pleasure on her account."

"Yes, I know she would. But it is so provoking when I had looked forward so to having her."

"You have never told me why she cannot come. She was quite full of it all a few days since."

"Oh, there is a poor old woman in the village dying, who is a great friend of Katie's. Here is her letter; let me see," she said, glancing over it to see that there is nothing in it that she did not wish him to read, "you may read it if you like."

Tom began reading. "Betty Winburn," he said, when he came to the name, "what, poor dear old Betty? why I've known her ever since I was born. She used to live in our parish, and I haven't seen her this eight years nearly. And her boy Harry, I wonder what has become of him?"

"You will see if you read on," said Mary; and so he read to the end, and then folded it up and returned it.

"So poor old Betty is dying. Well she was always a good soul, and very kind to me when I was a boy. I should like to see her once again, and perhaps I might be able to do something for her son."

"Why should we not ride over to Englebourn to-morrow? They will be glad to get us out of the way while the house is being straightened."

"I should like it of all things, if it can be managed."

"Oh, I will manage it somehow, for I must go and see that dear Katie. I do feel so ashamed of myself when I think of all the good she is doing, and I do nothing but put flowers about, and play the piano. Isn't she an angel, now?"

"Of course she is."

"Yes, but I won't have that sort of matter-of-course acquiescence. Now-do you really mean that Katie is as good as an angel?"

"As seriously as if I saw the wings growing out of her shoulders, and dew drops hanging on them."

"You deserve to have some thing not at all like wings growing out of your head. How is it that you never see when I don't want you to talk your nonsense?"

"How am I to talk sense about angels? I don't know anything about them."

"You know what I mean perfectly. I say that dear Katie is an angel, and I mean that I don't know anything in her—no not one single thing--which I should like to have changed. If the angels are all as good as she"—

"*If!* why I shall begin to doubt your orthodoxy."

"You don't know what I was going to say."

"It doesn't matter what you were going to say. You couldn't have brought that sentence into an orthodox conclusion. Oh, please don't look so angry, now. Yes, I quite see what you mean. You can think of Katie just as she is now in heaven without being shocked."

Mary paused for a moment before she answered, as if taken by surprise at this way of putting her meaning and then said seriously—

"Indeed, I can. I think we should all be perfectly happy if we were all as good as she is."

"But she is not very happy herself, I am afraid."

"Of course not. How can she be, when all the people about her are so troublesome and selfish?"

"I can't fancy an angel the least bit like Uncle Robert, can you?"

"I won't talk about angels any more. You have made me feel quite as if I had been saying something wicked."

"Now really it is too hard that you should lay all the blame on me, when you began the subject yourself. You ought at least to let me say what I have to say about angels."

"Why, you said you knew nothing about them half a minute ago."

"But I may have my notions, like other people, you have your notions. Katie is your angel."

"Well, then, what are your notions?"

"Katie is rather too dark for my idea of an angel. I can't fancy a dark angel."

"Why, how can you call Katie dark!"

"I only say she is too dark for my idea of an angel."

"Well, go on."

"Then, she is rather too grave."

"Too grave for an angel!"

"For my idea of an angel—one doesn't want one's angel to be like oneself, and I am so grave, you know."

"Yes, very. Then your angel is to be a laughing angel. A laughing angel, and yet very sensible; never talking nonsense?"

"Oh, I didn't say that."

"But you said he wasn't to be like you."

"*He!* who in the world do you mean by *he?*"

"Why, your angel, of course."

"My angel! You don't really suppose that my angel is to be a man."

"I have no time to think about it. Look, they are putting those targets quite crooked. You are responsible for the targets; we must go and get them straight."

They walked across the ground towards the targets, and Tom settled them according to his notions of opposites.

"After all, archery is slow work," he said, when the targets were settled satisfactorily. "I don't believe anybody really enjoys it."

"Now that is because you men haven't it all to yourselves. You are jealous of any sort of game in which we can join. I believe you are afraid of being beaten by us."

"On the contrary, that is its only recommendation, that you can join in it."

"Well, I think that ought to be recommendation enough. But I believe it is much harder than most of your games. You can't shoot half so well as you can play cricket, can you?"

"No, because I never practice. It isn't exciting to be walking up and down between two targets, and doing the same thing over and over again. Why, you don't find it so yourself. You hardly ever shoot."

"Indeed, I do though, constantly."

"Why, I have scarcely ever seen you shooting."

"That is because you are away with the boys all day."

"Oh, I am never too far to know what is going on. I'm sure you have never practised for more than a quarter of an hour any day I have been here."

"Well, perhaps I may not have. But I tell you I am very fond of it."

Here the two boys came up from the brook, Neddy with his Scotch cap full of crayfish.

"Why, you wretched boys, where have you been? You are not fit to be seen," said Mary, shaking the arrows at them which she was carrying in her hand. "Go and dress directly, or you will be late. I think I heard a carriage driving up just now."

"Oh, there's plenty of time. Look what whackers, Cousin Tom," said Charley, holding out one of his prizes

by its back towards Tom, while the indignant crayfish flapped its tail and worked around with its claws, in hopes of getting hold of something to pinch.

"I don't believe those boys have been dry for two hours together in daylight since you first came here," said Mary to Tom.

"Well, and they're all the better for it, I'm sure," said Tom.

"Yes, that we are," said Charley.

"I say Charley," said Tom, "your sister says she is very fond of shooting."

"Ay, and so she is. And isn't she a good shot too? I believe she would beat you at fifty yards."

"There now you see you need not have been so unbelieving," said Mary.

"Will you give her a shot at your new hat, Cousin Tom?" said Neddy.

"Yes, Neddy, that I will;" and he added to Mary, "I will bet you a pair of gloves that you don't hit it in three shots."

"Very well," said Mary; "at thirty yards."

"No, no! fifty yards was the named distance."

"No, fifty yards is too far. Why, you hat is not much bigger than the gold."

"Well, I don't mind splitting the difference; we will say forty."

"Very well—three shots at forty yards."

"Yes; here, Charley, run and hang my hat on that target." The boys rushed off with the hat—a new white one—and hung it with a bit of string over the center of one of the targets, and then, stepping a little aside, stood, clapping their hands, shouting to Mary to take good aim.

"You must string my bow," she said, handing it to him as she buckled on her guard. "Now, do you repent? I am going to do my best, mind, if I do shoot."

"I scorn repentance; do your worst," said Tom, stringing the bow and handing it back to her. "And now I will hold your arrows; here is the forty yards."

Mary came to the place which he had stepped, her eyes full of fun and mischief; and he saw at once that she knew what she was about as she took her position and drew the first arrow. It missed the hat by some three inches only, and the boys clapped and shouted.

"Too near to be pleasant," said Tom, handing the second arrow. "I see you can shoot."

"Well, I will let you off still."

"Gloves and all?"

"No, of course you must pay the gloves."

"Shoot away, then. Ah, that will do," he cried, as the second arrow struck considerably above the hat, 'I shall get my gloves yet," and he handed the third arrow. They were too intent on the business in hand to observe that Mr. and Mrs. Porter and several guests were already on the hand-bridge which crossed the haw-haw.

Mary drew her third arrow, paused a moment, loosed it, and this time with fatal aim.

The boys rushed to the target, towards which Mary and Tom also hurried, Mr. and Mrs. Porter and the new comers following more quietly.

"Oh, look here—what fun," said Charley, as Tom came up, holding up the hat spiked on the arrow which he had drawn out of the target.

"What a wicked shot," he said, taking the hat and turning to Mary. "Look here, you have actually gone through three places—through crown, and side, and brim."

Mary began to feel quite sorry at her own success, and looked at the wounded hat sorrowfully.

"Hullo, look here—here's papa and mamma and some people, and we ain't dressed. Come along Neddy," and the boys made off towards the back premises, while Mary and Tom, turning round, found themselves in the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Porter, Mrs. Brown, and two or three other guests.

CHAPTER XXXI.

BEHIND THE SCENES.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown had a long way to drive home that evening, including some eight miles of very indifferent chalky road over the downs, which separate the Vale of Kennet from the Vale of White Horse. Mr. Brown was a early man, and careful of his horses, who responded to his care by being always well up to much more work than they were ever put to. The drive to Barton Manor and

back in a day was a rare event in their lives. Their master taking this fact into consideration, was bent on giving them plenty of time for the return journey, and had ordered his groom to be ready to start by eight o'clock. But, that they might not disturb the rest by their early departure, he had sent the carriage to the village inn, instead of to the Porter's stables.

At the appointed time, therefore, and when the evening's amusements were just beginning at the manor house, Mr. Brown sought out his wife; and, after a few words of leave-taking to their host and hostess, the two slipped quietly away, and walked down the village. The carriage was standing before the inn all ready for them, with the hostler and Mr. Brown's groom at the horses' heads. The carriage was a high phaeton having a roomy front seat with a hood to it, specially devised by Mr. Brown with a view to his wife's comfort, and that he might with a good conscience enjoy at the same time the pleasures of her society and of driving his own horses. When once in her place Mrs. Brown was as comfortable as she would have been in the most luxurious barouche with C springs, but the ascent was certainly rather a drawback. The pleasure of sitting by her husband and of receiving his assiduous help in the preliminary climb, however, more than compensated to Mrs. Brown for this little inconvenience.

Mr. Brown helped her up as usual, and arranged a plaid carefully over her knees, the weather being too hot for the apron. He then proceeded to walk round the horses, patting them, examining the bits, and making inquiries as to how they had fed. Having satisfied himself on these points and feed the hostler, he took the reins, seated himself by his wife, and started at a steady pace towards the hills at the back of Barton village.

For a minute or two neither of them spoke, Mr. Brown being engrossed with his horses and she with her thoughts. Presently, however, he turned to her, and, having ascertained that she was quite comfortable, went on—

"Well, my dear, what do you think of them?"

"Oh, I think they are agreeable people," answered Mrs. Brown; "but one can scarcely judge from seeing them to-day. It is too far for a drive; we shall not be home till midnight."

"But I am very glad we came. After all they are connexions through poor Robert, and he seems anxious that

they should start well in the county. Why, he has actually written twice you know about our coming up to-day. We must try to show them some civility."

"It is impossible to come so far often," Mrs. Brown persisted.

"It is too far for ordinary visiting. What do you say to asking them to come and spend a day or two with us?"

"Certainly, my dear, if you wish it," answered Mrs. Brown, but without much cordiality in her voice.

"Yes, I should like it; and it will please Robert so much. We might have him and Katie over to meet them, don't you think?"

"Let me see," said Mrs, Brown, with much more alacrity, "Mr. and Mrs. Porter will have the best bed-room and dressing-room; Robert must have the south room, and Katie the chintz. Yes, that will do; I can manage it very well."

"And their daughter; you have forgotten her."

"Well, you see, dear, there is no more room."

"Why, there is the dressing-room, next to the south room, with a bed in it. I'm sure nobody can want a better room."

"You know, John, that Robert cannot sleep if there is the least noise. I could never put any-one into his dressing-room; there is only a single door between the rooms, and even if they made no noise, the fancy that some one was sleeping there would keep him awake all night."

"Plague take his fancies! Robert has given way to them till he is fit for nothing. But you can put him in the chintz room, and give the two girls the south bed room and dressing room."

"What, put Robert in a room which looks north? My dear John, what can you be thinking about?"

Mr. Brown uttered an impatient grunt, and, as a vent to his feelings more decorous on the whole than abusing his brother-in-law, drew his whip more smartly than usual across the backs of his horses. The exertion of muscle necessary to reduce those astonished animals to their accustomed steady trot restored his temper, and he returned to the charge—

"I suppose we must manage it on the second floor, then, unless you could get a bed run up in the school-room."

"No, dear; I really should not like to do that—it would be so very inconvenient. We are always wanting the room for workwomen or servants; besides, I keep my account-books and other things there."

"Then I'm afraid it must be on the second floor. Some of the children must be moved. The girl seems a nice girl with no nonsense about her, and won't mind sleeping up there. Or, why not put Katie upstairs?"

"Indeed, I should not think of it. Katie is a dear good girl, and I will not put any one over her head."

"Nor I, dear. On the contrary, I was asking you to put her over another person's head," said Mr. Brown, laughing at his own joke, This unusual reluctance on the part of his wife to assist in carrying out any hospitable plans of his began to strike him; so, not being an adept at concealing his thoughts, or gaining his point by any attack except a direct one, after driving on for a minute in silence, he turned suddenly on his wife, and said,—

"Why, Lizzie, you seem not to want to ask the girl?"

"Well, John, I do not see the need of it at all."

"No, and you don't want to ask her?"

"If you must know, then, I do not."

"Don't you like her?"

"I do not know her well enough either to like or dislike."

"Then, why not ask her, and see what she is like? But the truth is, Lizzie, you have taken a prejudice against her?"

"Well, John, I think she is a thoughtless girl, and extravagant; not the sort of girl, in fact, that I should wish to be much with us."

"Thoughtless and extravagant!" said Mr. Brown, looking grave; "how you women can be so sharp on one another! Her dress seemed to me simple and pretty, and her manners very lady-like and pleasing."

"You seem to have quite forgotten about Tom's hat," said Mrs. Brown.

"Tom's white hat—so I had," said Mr. Brown, and he relapsed into a low laugh at the remembrance of the scene. "I call that *his* extravagance, and not hers."

"It was a new hat, and a very expensive one, which he had bought for the vacation, and it is quite spoilt."

"Well, my dear; really, if Tom will let girls shoot at his

hats, he must take the consequences. He must wear it with the holes, or buy another."

"How can he afford another, John? you know how poor he is."

Mr. Brown drove on now for several minutes without speaking. He knew perfectly well what his wife was coming to now, and, after weighing in his mind the alternatives of accepting battle or making sail and changing the subject altogether, said,—

"You know, my dear, he has brought it on himself. A headlong, generous sort of youngster, like Tom, must be taught early that he can't have his cake and eat his cake. If he likes to lend his money, he must find out that he hasn't it to spend."

"Yes, dear, I quite agree with you. But 50*l* a year is a great deal to make him pay."

"Not a bit too much, Lizzie. His allowance is quite enough without it to keep him like a gentleman. Besides, after all, he gets it in meal or in malt; I have just paid 25*l* for his gun."

"I know how kind and liberal you are to him; only I am so afraid of his getting into debt."

"I wonder what men would do, if they hadn't some soft-hearted woman always ready to take their parts and pull them out of scrapes," said Mr. Brown. "Well, dear, how much do you want to give the boy?"

"Twenty-five pounds, just for this year. But out of my own allowance, John."

"Nonsense!" replied Mr. Brown; "you want your allowance for yourself and the children."

"Indeed, dear John, I would sooner not do it at all, then, if I may not do it out of my own money."

"Well, have it your own way. I believe you would always look well-dressed, if you never bought another gown. Then, to go back to what we were talking about just now—you will find a room for the girl somehow?"

"Yes, dear, certainly, as I see you are bent on it."

"I think it would be scarcely civil not to ask her, especially if Katie comes. And I own I think her very pretty, and have taken a great fancy to her."

"Isn't it odd that Tom should never have said anything about her to us? He has talked of all the rest till I knew them quite well before I went there."

"No; it seems to me the most natural thing in the world."

"Yes, dear, very natural. But I can't help wishing he had talked about her more; I should think it less dangerous."

"Oh, you think Master Tom is in love with her, eh?" said Mr. Brown, laughing.

"More unlikely things have happened. You take it very easily, John."

"Well, we have all been boys and girls, Lizzie. The world hasn't altered much, I suppose, since I used to get up at five on winter mornings, to ride some twenty miles to cover, on the chance of meeting a young lady on a grey pony. I remember how my poor dear old father used to wonder at it, when our hounds met close by in a better country. I'm afraid I forgot to tell him what a pretty creature 'Gipsy' was, and how well she was ridden."

"But Tom is only twenty, and he must go into a profession."

"Yes, yes; much to young, I know—too young for anything serious. We had better see them together, and then, if there is anything in it, we can keep them apart. There cannot be much the matter yet."

"Well, dear, if you are satisfied, I am sure I am."

And so the conversation turned on other subjects, and Mr. and Mrs. Brown enjoyed their moonlight drive home through the delicious summer night, and were quite sorry when the groom got down from the hind-seat to open their own gates, at half-past twelve.

About the same time the festivities at Barton Manor were coming to a close. There had been cold dinner in the tent at six, after the great match of the day; and, after dinner, the announcement of the scores, and the distribution of prizes to the winners. A certain amount of toasts and speechifying followed, which the ladies sat through with the most exemplary appearance of being amused. When their healths had been proposed and acknowledged, they retired, and were soon followed by the younger portion of the male sex; and, while the J. P.'s and clergymen sat quietly at their wine, which Mr. Porter took care should be remarkably good, and their wives went to look over the house and have tea, their sons and daughters split up into groups, and some shot handicaps, and some walked about and flirted, and some played at bowls and lawn billiards. And soon the band appeared again from the servants' hall,

mightily refreshed; and dancing began on the grass, and in due time was transferred to the tent, when the grass got damp with the night dew; and then to the hall of the house, when the lighting of the tent began to fail. And then there came a supper, extemporized out of the remains of the dinner; after which, papas and mammas began to look at their watches, and remonstrate with daughters, coming up with sparkling eyes and hair a little shaken out of place, and pleading for "just one more dance." "You have been going on ever since one o'clock," remonstrate the parents; "And are ready to go on till one to-morrow," replied the children. By degrees, however, the frequent sound of wheels was heard, and the dancers got thinner and thinner, till, for the last half hour, some half-dozen couples of young people danced at interminable reel, while Mr. and Mrs. Porter, and a few of the most good-natured matrons of the neighborhood looked on. Soon after midnight the band struck; no amount of negus could get anything more out of them but "God save the Queen," which they accordingly played and departed; and then came the final cloaking and driving off of the last guests. Tom and Mary saw the last of them into their carriage at the hall-door, and lingered a moment in the porch.

"What a lovely night!" said Mary. "How I hate going to bed!"

"It is a dreadful bore," answered Tom; "but here is the butler waiting to shut up; we must go in."

"I wonder where papa and mama are."

"Oh, they are only seeing things put a little to rights. Let us sit here till they come; they must pass by to get to their rooms."

So the two sat down on some hall chairs.

"Oh dear! I wish it were all coming over again to-morrow," said Tom, leaning back, and looking up at the ceiling. "By the way, remember I owe you a pair of gloves; what color shall they be?"

"Any color you like. I can't bear to think of it. I felt so dreadfully ashamed when they all came up, and your mother looked so grave; I am sure she was very angry."

"Poor mother! she was thinking of my hat with three arrow-holes in it."

"Well, I am very sorry, because I wanted them to like me."

"And so they will; I should like to know who can help it."

"Now, I won't have any of your nonsensical compliments. Do you think they enjoyed the day?"

"Yes, I am sure they did. My father said he had never liked an archery meeting so much."

"But they went away so early."

"They had a very long drive, you know. Let me see," he said, feeling in his breast-pocket, "mother left me a note and I have never looked at it till now." He took a slip of paper out and read it, and his face fell.

"What is it?" said Mary, leaning forward.

"Oh, nothing; only I must go to-morrow morning."

"There, I was sure she was angry."

"No, no; it was written this morning before she came here. I can tell by the paper."

"But she will not let you stay here a day, you see."

"I have been here a good deal, considering all things. I should like never to go away."

"Perhaps papa might find a place for you, if you asked him. Which should you like,—to be tutor to the boys, or gamekeeper?"

"On the whole, I should prefer the tutorship at present you take so much interest in the boys."

"Yes, because they have no one to look after them now in the holidays. But, when you come as tutor, I shall wash my hands of them."

"Then I shall decline the situation."

"How are you going home to-morrow?"

"I shall ride round by Englebourn. They wish me to go round and see Katie and Uncle Robert. You talked about riding over there yourself this morning."

"I should like it so much. But how can we manage it I can't ride back again by myself."

"Couldn't you stay and sleep there?"

"I will ask mamma. No, I'm afraid it can hardly be managed;" and so saying, Mary leant back in her chair and began to pull to pieces some flowers she held in her hand.

"Don't pull them to pieces; give them to me," said Tom "I have kept the rosebud you gave me at Oxford, folded up in"—

"Which you took, you mean to say. No, I won't give

you any of them—or, let me see—yes, here is a sprig of lavender; you may have that."

"Thank you. But, why lavender?"

"Lavender stands for sincerity. It will remind you of the lecture you gave me."

"I wish you would forget that. But you know what flowers mean, then? Do give me a lecture; you owe me one. What do those flowers mean which you will not give me,—the piece of heather for instance?"

"Heather signifies constancy."

"And the carnations?"

"Jealousy."

"And the heliotrope?"

"Oh, never mind the heliotrope."

"But it is such a favorite of mine. Do tell me what it means?"

"*Je vous aime*," said Mary with a laugh, and a slight blush; "it is all nonsense. Oh, here's mamma at last," and she jumped up and went to meet her mother, who came out of the drawing-room, candle in hand.

"My dear Mary I thought you were gone to bed," said Mrs. Porter, looking from one to the other seriously.

"Oh, I'm not the least tired, and I couldn't go without wishing you and papa good night, and thanking you for all the trouble you have taken."

"Indeed we ought all to thank you," said Tom; "everybody said it was the pleasantest party they had ever been at."

"I am very glad it went off so well," said Mrs. Porter, gravely; "and now, Mary, you must go to bed."

"I am afraid I must leave you to-morrow morning," said Tom.

"Yes; Mrs. Brown said they expect you at home to-morrow."

"I am to ride round by Uncle Robert's; would you like one of the boys to go with me?"

"Oh, dear mamma, could not Charley and I ride over to Englebourn? I do so long to see Katie."

"No, dear; it is much too far for you. We will drive over in a few days' time."

And so saying Mrs. Porter wished Tom good night, and led off her daughter.

Tom went slowly up stairs to his room, and, after packing his portmanteau for the carrier to take in the morning,

threw up his window and leant out into the night, and watched the light clouds swimming over the moon, and the silver mist folding the water-meadows and willows in its soft cool mantle. His thoughts were such as will occur to any reader who has passed the witching age of twenty; and the scent of the heliotrope-bed in the flower-garden below, seemed to rise very strongly on the night air

CHAPTER XXXII.

A CRISIS.

In the forenoon of the following day Tom rode slowly along the street of Englebourn towards the Rectory gate. He had left Barton soon after breakfast, without having been able to exchange a word with Mary except in the presence of her mother, and yet he had felt more anxious than ever before at least to say good bye to her without witnesses. With this view he had been up early, and had whistled a tune in the hall, and held a loud conversation with the boys, who appeared half dressed in the gallery above, while he brushed the dilapidated white hat, to let all whom it might concern know that he was on the move. Then he had walked up and down the garden in full view of the windows till the bell rang for prayers. He was in the breakfast room before the bell had done ringing, and Mrs. Porter, followed by her daughter, entered at the same moment. He could not help fancying that the conversation at breakfast was a little constrained, and particularly remarked that nothing was said by the heads of the family when the boys vociferously bewailed his approaching departure, and tried to get him to name some day for his return before their holidays ended. Instead of encouraging the idea, Mrs. Porter reminded Neddy and Charley that they had only ten days more, and had not yet looked at the work they had to do for their tutor in the holidays. Immediately after breakfast Mrs. Porter had wished him good bye herself very kindly, but (he could not help thinking) without that air of near relationship which he had flattered himself was well established between himself and all the members of the Porter family; and then she had added, "Now

Mary you must say good bye; I want you to come and help me with some work this morning." He had scarcely looked at her all the morning, and now one shake of the hand and she was spirited away in a moment, and he was left standing, dissatisfied and uncomfortable, with a sense of incompleteness in his mind, and as if he had had a thread in his life suddenly broken off which he could not tell how to get joined again.

However, there was nothing for it but to get off. He had no excuse for delay, and had a long ride before him; so he and the boys went round to the stable. On their passage through the garden the idea of picking a nosegay and sending it to her by one of the boys came into his head. He gathered the flowers, but then thought better of it and threw them away. What right, after all had he to be sending flowers to her—above all, flowers to which they had attached a meaning, jokingly it was true, but still a meaning? No, he had no right to do it; it would not be fair to her, or her father or mother, after the kind way in which they had all received him. So he threw away the flowers, and mounted and rode off, watched by the boys, who waved their straw hats as he looked back just before coming to a turn in the road which would take him out of sight of the Manor House. He rode along at a foot's pace for some time, thinking over the events of the past week; and then, beginning to feel purposeless, and somewhat melancholy, urged his horse into a smart trot along the waste land which skirted the road. But, go what pace he would, it mattered not; he could not leave his thoughts behind. So he pulled up again after a mile or so, slackened his reins, and, leaving his horse to pick his own way along the road, betook himself to the serious consideration of his position.

The more he thought of it the more discontented he became, and the day clouded over as if to suit his temper. He felt as if within the last twenty-four hours he had been somehow unwarrantably interfered with. His mother and Mrs. Porter had both been planning something about him, he felt sure. If they had anything to say, why couldn't they say it out to him? But what could there be to say? Couldn't he and Mary be trusted together without making fools of themselves? He did not stop to analyze his feelings towards her, or to consider whether it was very prudent or desirable for her that they should be thrown so constantly and unreservedly together. He was too much taken

up with what he chose to consider his own wrongs for any such consideration.—"Why can't they let me alone?" was the question which he asked himself perpetually, and it seemed to him the most reasonable one in the world, and that no satisfactory answer was possible to it, except that he ought to be, and should be let alone. And so at last he rode along Englebourn street, convinced that what he had to do before all other things just now was to assert himself properly, and show every one, even his own mother, that he was no longer a boy to be managed according to any one's fancies except his own.

He rode straight to the stables and loosed the girths of his horse, and gave particular directions about grooming and feeding him, and stayed in the stall for a few minutes rubbing his ears and fondling him. The antagonism which possessed him for the moment against mankind perhaps made him appreciate the value of his relations with a well-trained beast. He had not been in Englebourn for some years, and the servant did not know him, and answered that Mr. Winter was not out of his room and never saw strangers till the afternoon. Where was Miss Winter, then? She was down the village at Widow Winburn's, and he couldn't tell when she would be back, the man said. The contents of Katie's note of the day before had gone out of his head, but the mention of Betty's name recalled them, and with them something of the kindly feeling which had stirred within him on hearing of her illness. So, saying he would call later to see his uncle, he started again to find the widow's cottage, and his cousin.

The servant had directed him to the last house in the village, but, when he got outside of the gate, there were houses in two directions. He looked about for some one and from whom to inquire further, and his eye fell upon our old acquaintance, the constable, coming out of his door with a parcel under his arm.

The little man was in a brown study, and did not notice Tom's first address. He was in fact anxiously thinking over his old friend's illness and her son's trouble; and was on his way to farmer Grove's, (having luckily the excuse of taking a coat to be tried on) in the hopes of getting him to interfere and patch up the quarrel between young Test and Harry.

Tom's first salute had been friendly enough; no one knew better how to speak to the poor, amongst whom he had

ved all his life, than he. But, not getting any answer, nd being in a touchy state of mind, he was put out, and nouted—

"Hello, my man, can't you hear me?"

"Ees, I beant dunch," replied the constable, turning and ooking at his questioner.

"I thought you were, for I spoke loud enough before. Which is Mrs. Winburn's cottage?"

"The furdest house down ther," he said, pointing, "'tis n my way if you've a mind to come." Tom accepted the ffer and walked along by the constable.

"Mrs. Winburn is ill, isn't she," he asked, after looking is guide over.

"Ees, her be—terrible bad," said the constable.

"What is the matter with her, do you know?"

"Zummat o' fits, I hears. Her've had 'em this six year, n and off."

"I suppose it's dangerous. I mean she isn't likely to get ell?"

"'Tis in the Lord's hands," replied the constable, "but er's that bad wi' pain, at times, 'twould be a mussy if would plaase He to tak' her out on't."

"Perhaps she mightn't think so," said Tom, supercilious-; he was not in the mind to agree with any one. The onstable looked at him solemnly for a moment, and then id—

"Her's been a God-fearin' woman from her youth up, nd her's had a deal o' trouble. Thaay as the Lord loveth le chasteneth, and 'tisn't such as thaay as is afeared to go ore Him."

"Well, I never found that having troubles made people a t more anxious to get 'out on't,' as you call it," said Tom.

"It don't seem to me as you can 'a had much o' trouble judge by," said the constable, who was beginning to be ettled by Tom's manner.

"How can you tell that?"

"Leastways 'twould be whoam-made, then," persisted e constable; "and ther's a sight o' odds atween whoam-ade troubles and thaay as the Lord sends."

"So there may; but I may have seen both sorts for any-ing you can tell."

"Nay, nay; the Lord's troubles leaves His marks."

"And you don't see any of *them* in my face, eh?"

The constable jerked his head after his own peculiar fashion, but declined to reply directly to this interrogatory. He parried it by one of his own.

"In the doctorin' line, make so bould?"

"No," said Tom. "You don't seem to have such very good eyes, after all."

"Oh, I seed you wasn't old enough to be doin' for yourself, like; but I thought you med ha' been a 'sistant, or summat."

"Well, then, your just mistaken," said Tom, considerably disgusted at being taken for a country doctor's assistant.

"I ax your pardon," said the constable. "But if you beant in the doctorin' line, what be gwine to Widow Winburn's for, make so bould?"

"That's my look out, I suppose," said Tom, almost angrily. "That's the house, isn't it?" and he pointed to the cottage already described, at the corner of Englebourn Copse.

"Ees."

"Good day, then."

"Good day," muttered the constable, not at all satisfied with this abrupt close of the conversation, but too unready to prolong it. He went on his own way slowly, looking back often, till he saw the door open; after which he seemed better satisfied, and ambled out of sight.

"The old snuffler!" thought Tom, as he strode up to the cottage door—"a ranter, I'll be bound, with his 'Lord's troubles,' and 'Lord's hands,' and 'Lord's marks.' I hope Uncle Robert hasn't many such in the parish."

He knocked at the cottage door, and in a few seconds it opened gently, and Katie slipped out with her finger on her lips. She made a slight gesture of surprise at seeing him, and held out her hand.

"Hush!" she said, "she is asleep. You are not in a hurry?"

"No, not particularly," he answered, abruptly; for there was something in her voice and manner which jarred with his humor.

"Hush!" she said again, "you must not speak so loud. We can sit down here, and talk quietly. I shall hear if she moves."

So he sat down opposite to her in the little porch of the cottage. She left the door ajar, so that she might catch the

least movement of her patient, and then turned to him with a bright smile, and said,—

"Well, I am so glad to see you! What good wind blows you here?"

"No particularly good wind, that I know of. Mary showed me your letter yesterday, and mother wished me to come round here on my way home; and so here I am."

"And how did the party go off? I long to hear about it."

"Very well; half the county were there, and it was all very well done."

"And how did dear Mary look?"

"Oh, just as usual. But now, Katie, why didn't you come? Mary and all of us were so disappointed."

"I thought you read my letter?"

"Yes, so I did."

"Then you know the reason."

"I don't call it a reason Really, you have no right to shut yourself up from everything. You will be getting moped to death."

"But do I look moped?" she said; and he looked at her, and couldn't help admitting to himself, reluctantly, that she did not. So he re-opened fire from another point.

"You will wear yourself out, nursing every old woman in the parish."

"But I don't nurse every old woman."

"Why, there is no one here but you to-day, now," he said, with a motion of his head towards the cottage.

"No, because I have let the regular nurse go home for a few hours. Besides, this is a special case. You don't know what a dear old soul Betty is."

"Yes, I do; I remember her ever since I was a child."

"Ah, I forgot; I have often heart her talk of you. Then you ought not be surprised at anything I may do for her."

"She is a good, kind old woman, I know. But still I must say, Katie, you ought to think of your friends and relations a little, and what you owe to society."

"Indeed, I do think of my friends and relations very much, and I should have liked, of all things to have been with you yesterday. You ought to be pitying me, instead of scolding me."

"My dear Katie, you know I didn't mean to scold you; and nobody admires the way you give yourself up to visiting, and all that sort of thing, more than I; only you

ought to have a little pleasure sometimes. People have a right to think of themselves and their own happiness a little."

"Perhaps I don't find visiting and all that sort of thing so very miserable. But now, Tom, you saw in my letter that poor Betty's son has got into trouble?"

"Yes; and that is what brought on her attack, you said."

"I believe so. She was in a sad state about him all yesterday,—so painfully eager and anxious. She is better to-day; but still I think it would do her good if you would see her, and say you will be a friend to her son. Would you mind?"

"It was just what I wished to do yesterday. I will do all I can for him, I'm sure. I always liked him as a boy; you can tell her that. But I don't feel, somehow—to-day, at least—as if I could do any good by seeing her.

"Oh, why not?"

"I don't think I'm in the right humor. Is she very ill?"

"Yes, very ill indeed; I don't think she can recover."

"Well, you see, Katie, I'm not used to death-beds. I shouldn't say the right sort of thing."

"How do you mean—the right sort of thing?"

"Oh, you know. I couldn't talk to her about her soul. I'm not fit for it, and it isn't my place."

"No, indeed, it isn't. But you can remind her of old times, and say a kind word about her son."

"Very well, if you don't think I shall do any harm."

"I'm sure it will comfort her. And now tell me about yesterday."

They sat talking for some time in the same low tone, and Tom began to forget his causes of quarrel with the world, and gave an account of the archery party from his own point of view. Katie saw, with a woman's quickness, that he avoided mentioning Mary, and smiled to herself and drew her own conclusions.

At last, there was a slight movement in the cottage, and laying her hand on his arm, she got up quickly, and went in. In a few minutes she came to the door again.

"How is she?" asked Tom.

"Oh, much the same; but she has waked without pain, which is a great blessing. Now, are you ready?"

"Yes; you must go with me."

"Come in, then." She turned, and he followed into the cottage.

Betty's bed had been moved into the kitchen, for the sake of light and air. He glanced at the corner where it stood with almost a feeling of awe, as he followed his cousin on tip-toe. It was all he could do to recognize the pale, drawn face which lay on the coarse pillow. The rush of old memories which the sight called up, and the thought of the suffering of his poor old friend touched him deeply.

Katie went to the bed-side, and, stooping down smoothed the pillow, and placed her hand for a moment on the forehead of her patient. Then she looked up, and beckoned to him, and said, in her low, clear voice,—

"Betty, here is an old friend come to see you; my cousin, Squire Brown's son. You remember him quite a little boy?"

The old woman moved her head towards the voice, and smiled, but gave no further sign of recognition. Tom stole across the floor, and sat down by the bed-side.

"Oh, yes, Betty," he said, leaning towards her and speaking softly, "you must remember me. Master Tom who used to come to your cottage on baking days for hot bread, you know."

"To be sure I minds un, bless his little heart," said the old woman faintly. "Hev he come to see poor Betty? Do'ee let un com', and lift un up so as I med see un. My sight be getting dim-like."

"Here he is, Betty," said Tom, taking her hand—a hard-working hand, lying there with the skin all puckered from long and daily acquaintance with the washing-tub—"I'm Master Tom."

"Ah, dearee me," she said slowly, looking at him with lustreless eyes. "Well, you be growed into a fine young gentleman, surely. And how's the Squire and Madam Brown, and all the fam'ly?"

"Oh, very well, Betty,—they will be so sorry to hear of your illness.

"But there ain't no hot bread for un. 'Tis ill to bake i' no fuz bushes, and the bakers' stuff is poor for hungry folk."

"I'm within three months as old as your Harry, you know," said Tom, trying to lead her back to the object of his visit.

"Harry," she repeated, and then collecting herself w
on, "our Harry; where is he? They haven't sent un
prison, and his mother a dyin'?"

"Oh, no, Betty; he will be here directly. I came to a
whether there is anything I can do for you,"

"You'll stand by un, poor buoy—our Harry, as you u
to play wi' when you was little—'twas they as aggrava
un so he couldn't abear it, afore ever he'd a struck a fly.'

"Yes, Betty; I will see that he has fair play. Do
trouble about that, it will be all right. You must be qu
quiet, and not trouble yourself about anything, that y
may get well and about again."

"Nay, nay, Master Tom. I be gwine whoam; ee
be gwine whoam to my maester, Harry's father—I kno
I be—and you'll stand by un when I be gone; and Squ
Brown 'll say a good word for un to the justices?"

"Yes, Betty, that he will. But you must cheer up,
you'll get better yet; don't be afraid."

"I beant afeard, Master Tom; no, bless you, I be
afeard but what the Lord 'll be mussiful to a poor l
woman like me, as has had a sore time of it since my m
ter died, wi' a hungry boy like our Harry to kep, back
belly; and the rheumatics terrible bad all winter time."

"I'm sure, Betty, you have done your duty by him,
everyone else."

"Dwontee speak o' doin's, Master Tom. 'Tis no do
o' ourn as'll make any odds where I be gwine."

Tom did not know what to answer; so he pressed
hand and said,—

"Well, Betty, I am very glad I have seen you o
more; I sha'n't forget it. Harry sha'n't want a friend w
I live."

"The Lord bless you, Master Tom, for that word,"
the dying woman, returning the pressure, as her eyes fi
with tears. Katie, who had been watching her caref
from the other side of the bed, made him a sign to go.

"Good-bye, Betty," he said; "I won't forget, you
be sure; God bless you;" and then, disengaging his h
gently, went out again into the porch, where he sat d
to wait for his cousin.

In a few minutes the nurse returned, and Katie came
of the cottage soon afterwards.

"Now I will walk up home with you," she said. "

must come in and see papa. Well, I'm sure you must be glad you went in. Was not I right?"

"Yes, indeed; I wish I could have said something more to comfort her."

"You couldn't have said more. It was just what she wanted."

"But where is her son? I ought to see him before I go."

"He has gone to the doctor's for some medicine. He will be back soon."

"Well, I must see him; and I should like to do something for him at once. I'm not very flush of money, but I must give you something for him. You'll take it; I shouldn't like to offer it to him."

"I hardly think he wants money; they are well off now. He earns good wages, and Betty has done her washing up to this week."

"Yes, but he will be fined, I suppose, for this assault; and then, if she should die, there will be the funeral expenses."

"Very well; as you please," she said; and Tom proceeded to hand over to her all his ready money, except a shilling or two. After satisfying his mind thus, he looked at her, and said—

"Do you know, Katie, I don't think I ever saw you so happy and in such spirits?"

"There now! And yet you began talking to me as if I were looking sad enough to turn all the beer in the parish sour."

"Well, so you ought to be, according to Cocker, spending all your time in sick rooms."

"According to who?"

"According to Cocker."

"Who is Cocker?"

"Oh, I don't know; some old fellow who wrote the rules of arithmetic, I believe; it's only a bit of slang. But, I repeat, you have a right to be sad, and it's taking an unfair advantage of your relations to look as pleasant as you do."

Katie laughed. "You ought not to say so, at any rate," she said, "for you look all the pleasanter for your visit to a sick room."

"Did I look very unpleasant before?"

"Well, I don't think you were in a very good humor."

"No, I was in a very bad humor, and talking to you and poor old Betty has set me right, I think. But you said hers

was a special case. It must be very sad work in gener

"Only when one sees people in great pain, or when t are wicked, and quarreling, or complaining about nothi then I do get very low sometimes. But even then it much better than keeping to one's self. Anything is be than thinking of one's self, and one's own troubles."

"I dare say you are right," said Tom, recalling his mo ing's meditations, "especially when one's troubles are ho made. Look, here's an old fellow who gave me a lect on that subject before I saw you this morning, and took for the apothecary's boy."

They were almost opposite David's door, at which stood with a piece of work in his hand. He had seen M Winter from his look-out window, and had descended fi his board in hopes of hearing news.

Katie returned his respectful and anxious salute, and s "She is no worse, David. We left her quite out of p and very quiet."

"Ah, 'tis to be hoped as she'll hev a peaceful time now, poor soul," said David; "I've a been to farmer Grov and I hope as he'll do summat about Harry."

"I'm glad to hear it," said Miss Winter, "and my co here, who knew Harry very well when they were l boys together, has promised to help him. This is Har best friend," she said to Tom, "who has done more t any one to keep him right."

David seemed a little embarrassed, and began jerking head about when his acquaintance of the morning wh he had scarcely noticed before, was introduced by M Winter as "my cousin."

"I wish to do all I can for him," said Tom, "and very glad to have made your acquaintance. You must me know whenever I can help;" and he took out a and handed it to David, who looked at it, and then sai

"And I be to write to you, sir, then, if Harry gets trouble?"

"Yes; but we must keep him out of trouble, even he made ones, which don't leave good marks, you know," Tom.

"And thaay be nine out o' ten o' aal as comes to a sir," said David, "as I've a told Harry scores o' times."

"That seems to be your text, David," said Tom, la ing.

Ah, and 'tis a good un too, sir. Ax Miss Winter else. a sight better to hev the Lord's troubles while you be ıt it, for thaay as hasn't makes wus for themselves out othin'. Dwon't 'em, Miss?"

Yes; you know that I agree with you, David."

Good-bye, then," said Tom, holding out his hand, "and d you let me hear from you."

What a queer old bird, with his whole wisdom of man ked up small for ready use, like a quack doctor," he , as soon as they were out of hearing.

Indeed, he isn't the least like a quack doctor. I don't w a better man in the parish, though he is rather obsti-, like all the rest of them."

I didn't mean to say anything against him, I assure " said Tom; " on the contrary, I think him a fine old w. But I didn't think so this morning, when he showed he way to Betty's cottage." The fact was that Tom all things and persons with quite a different pair of from those which he had been provided with when he ed in Englebourn that morning. He even made al-nces for old Mr. Winter, who was in his usual queru-state at luncheon, though perhaps it would have been ult in the whole neighborhood to find a more pertinent ment on, and illustration of, the constable's text than poor old man furnished, with his complaints about his heaith, and all he had to do and think of, for every-about him. It did strike Tom, however, as very won-l how such a character as Katie's could have grown up r the shade of, and in constant contact with, such a one er father's. He wished his uncle good-bye soon after neon, and he and Katie started again down the village e to return to her nursing and he on his way home. ed his horse by the bridle and walked by her side down treet. She pointed to the Hawk's Lynch as they ed along, and said, " You should ride up there; it is ely out of your way. Mary and I used to walk there day when she was here, and she was so fond of it."

the cottage they found Harry Winburn. He came nd the two young men shook hands, and looked one ner over, and exchanged a few shy sentences. Tom ged with difficulty to say the little he had to say, but to make up for it by a hearty manner. It was not the or place for any unnecessary talk; so in a few minutes as mounted and riding up the slope towards the

heath. "I should say he must be half a stone lighter than I," he thought, "and not quite so tall; but he looks as hard as iron, and tough as whipcord. What a No. 7 he'd make in a heavy crew! Poor fellow, he seems dreadfully cut up. I hope I shall be able to be of use to him. Now for this place which Katie showed me from the village street."

He pressed his horse up the steep side of the Hawk's Lynch. The exhilaration of the scramble, and the sense of power, and of some slight risk, which he felt as he helped on the gallant beast with hand and knee and heel, while the loose turf and stones flew from his hoofs and rolled down the hill behind them, made Tom's eyes kindle and his pulse beat quicker as he reached the top and pulled up under the Scotch firs. "This was her favorite walk, then. No wonder. What an air, and what a view!" He jumped off his horse, slipped the bridle over his arm and let him pick away at the short grass and tufts of heath as he himself first stood, and then sat, and looked out over the scene which she had so often looked over. She might have sat on the very spot he was sitting on; she must have taken in the same expanse of wood and meadow, village and park, and dreamy, distant hill. Her presence seemed to fill the air round him. A rush of new thoughts and feelings swam through his brain and carried him, a willing piece of drift man, along with them. He gave himself up to the stream and revelled in them. His eye traced back the road along which he had ridden in the morning, and rested on the Barton woods, just visible in the distance, on this side of the point where all outline except that of the horizon began to be lost. The flickering July air seemed to beat in a pulse of purple glory over the spot. The soft wind which blew straight from Barton seemed laden with her name, and whispered it in the firs over his head. Every nerve in his body was bounding with new life, and he could sit still no longer. He rose, sprang on his horse, and, with a shout of joy, turned from the vale and rushed away on to the heath northwards, towards his home behind the chalk hills. He had ridden into Englebourn in the morning an almost unconscious dabbler by the margin of the great stream; he rode from the Hawk's Lynch in the afternoon over head and ears, and twenty, a hundred, ay, unnumbered fathoms below that, deep, consciously, and triumphantly in love.

But at what a pace, and in what a form! Love, at least in
s first access, must be as blind a horseman as he is an
cher. The heath was rough with peat-cutting and turf-
tting and many a deep-rutted farm road, and tufts of
ather and furze. Over them and through them went
rse and man—horse rising seven and man twenty off, a
ell-matched pair in age for a wild ride—headlong towards
e north, till a blind rut somewhat deeper than usual put
end to their career, and sent the good horse staggering
rward some thirty feet on to his nose and knees, and Tom
er his shoulder, on to his back in the heather.

"Well, it's lucky it's no worse," thought our hero, as he
cked himself up and anxiously examined the horse, who
od trembling and looking wildly puzzled at the whole
oceeding; "I hope he hasn't overreached. What will the
vernor say? His knees are all right. Poor old boy," he
d, patting him, "no wonder you look astonished. You're
t in love. Come along; we won't make fools of ourselves
y more. What is it?—

> 'A true love forsaken a new love may get,
> But a neck that's once broken can never be set.'

hat stuff! one may get a neck set for anything I know;
t a new love—blasphemy!"

The rest of the ride passed off soberly enough, except in
om's brain, wherein were built up in gorgeous succession
stles such as—we have all built, I suppose, before now.
nd with the castles were built up side by side good honest
solves to be worthy of her, and win her and worship her
th body; and mind, and soul. And, as a first instalment,
vay to the winds went all the selfish morning thoughts;
d he rode down the northern slope of the chalk hills a
tiful and affectionate son, at peace with Mrs. Porter, hon-
ing her for her care of the treasure which he was seeking,
d in good time for dinner.

"Well, dear," said Mrs. Brown to her husband when
ey were alone that night, "did you ever see Tom in such
irits, and so gentle and affectionate? Dear boy; there can
nothing the matter."

"Didn't I tell you so," replied Mr. Brown; "you women
ve always got some nonsense in your heads as soon as
our boys have a hair on their chin or your girls begin to
t up their back hair."

"Well, John, say what you will, I'm sure Mary Porter is a very sweet, taking girl, and—"

"I am quite of the same opinion," said Mr. Brown, "and am very glad you have written to ask them here."

And so the worthy couple went happily to bed.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

BROWN PATRONUS.

On a Saturday afternoon in August, a few weeks after his eventful ride, Tom returned to the Englebourn Rectory to stay over Sunday, and attend Betty Winburn's funeral. He was strangely attracted to Harry by the remembrance of their old boyish rivalry; by the story which he had heard from his cousin, of the unwavering perseverance with which the young peasant clung to and pursued his suit for Simon's daughter; but, more than all, by the feeling of gratitude with which he remembered the effect his visit to Betty's sick room had had on him, on the day of his ride from Barton Manor. On that day he knew that he had ridden into Englebourn in a miserable mental fog, and had ridden out of it in sunshine, which had lasted through the intervening weeks. Somehow or another he had been set straight then and there, turned into the right road and out of the wrong one, at what he very naturally believed to be the most critical moment of his life.

Without stopping to weigh accurately the respective merits of the several persons whom he came in contact with that day, he credited them all with a large amount of gratitude and good-will, and Harry with his mother's share as well as his own. So he had been longing to *do* something for him ever since. The more he rejoiced in, and gave himself up to his own new sensations, the more did his gratitude become as it were a burden to him; and yet no opportunity offered of letting off some of it in action. The magistrates, taking into consideration the dangerous state of his mother, had let Harry off with a reprimand for his assault; so there was nothing to be done there. He wrote to Katie offering more money for the Winburns; but she declined—adding, however, to her note, by way of postscript, that he might

give it to her clothing club or coal club. Then came the news of Betty's death, and an intimation from Katie that she thought Harry would be much gratified if he would attend the funeral. He jumped at the suggestion. All Englebourn, from the Hawk's Lynch to the Rectory, was hallowed ground to him. The idea of getting back there, so much nearer to Barton Manor, filled him with joy which he tried in vain to repress when he thought of the main object of his visit on the present occasion.

He arrived in time to go and shake hands with Harry before dinner; and, though scarcely a word passed between them, he saw with delight that he had evidently given pleasure to the mourner. Then he had a charming long evening with Katie, walking in the garden with her between dinner and tea, and after tea discoursing in low tones over her work-table, while Mr. Winter benevolently slept in his arm-chair. Their discourse branched into many paths, but managed always somehow to end in the sayings, beliefs, and perfections of the young lady of Barton Manor. Tom wondered how it had happened so when he got to his own room, as he fancied he had not betrayed himself in the least. He had determined to keep resolutely on his guard, and to make a confident of no living soul till he was twenty-one, and, though sorely tempted to break his resolution in favor of Katie, had restrained himself. He might have spared himself all the trouble; but this he did not know, being unversed in the ways of women, and all unaware of the subtlety and quickness of their intuitions in all matters connected with the heart. Poor, dear, stolid, dim-sighted mankind, how they do see through us and walk round us!

The funeral on the Sunday afternoon between churches had touched him much, being the first he had ever attended. He walked next behind the chief mourner—the few friends, amongst whom David was conspicuous, yielding place to him. He stood beside Harry in church, and at the open grave, and made the responses as firmly as he could, and pressed his shoulder against his, when he felt the strong frame of the son trembling with the weight and burden of his resolutely suppressed agony. When they parted at the cottage door, to which Tom accompanied the mourner and his old and tried friend David, though nothing but a look and a grasp of the hand passed between them, he felt that they were bound by a new and invisible bond; and, as he

walked back up the village and passed the churchyard, where the children were playing about on the graves—stopping every now and then to watch the sexton as he stamped down and filled in the mould on the last made one, beside which he himself stood as a mourner—and heard the bells beginning to chime for the afternoon service, he resolved within himself that he would be a true and helpful friend to the widow's son. On this subject he could talk freely to Katie; and he did so that evening, expounding how much one in his position could do for a young laboring man if he was really bent on it, and building up grand castles for Harry, the foundations of which rested on his own determination to benefit and patronize him. Katie listened half doubtingly at first, but was soon led away by his confidence, and poured out the tea in the full belief that with Tom's powerful aid all would go well. After which they took to reading the "Christian Year" together, and branched into discussions on profane poetry, which Katie considered scarcely proper for the evening, but which, nevertheless, being of such rare occurrence with her, she had not the heart to stop.

The next morning Tom was to return home. After breakfast he began the subject of his future plans for Harry again, when Katie produced a small paper packet, which she handed to him, saying—

"Here is your money again."

"What money?"

"The money you left with me for Harry Winburn. I thought at the time that most probably he would not take it."

"But are you sure he doesn't want it? Did you try hard to get him to take it?" said Tom, holding out his hand reluctantly for the money.

"Not myself. I couldn't offer him money myself, of course; but I sent it by David, and begged him to do all he could to persuade him to take it."

"Well, and why wouldn't he?"

"Oh, he said the club-money which was coming in was more than enough to pay for the funeral, and for himself he didn't want it."

"How provoking! I wonder if old David really did his best to get him to take it."

"Yes, I am sure he did. But you ought to be very glad to find some independence in a poor man,"

"Bother his independence! I don't like to feel that it costs me nothing but talk—I want to pay."

"Ah, Tom, if you knew the poor as well as I do, you wouldn't say so. I am afraid there are not two other men in the parish who would have refused your money. The fear of undermining their independence takes away all my pleasure in giving."

"Undermining! Why, Katie, I am sure I have heard you mourn over their stubbornness and unreasonableness."

"Oh, yes; they are often provokingly stubborn and unreasonable, and yet not independent about money, or anything they can get out of you. Besides, I acknowledge that I have become wiser of late; I used to like to see them dependent and cringing to me, but now I dread it."

"But you would like David to give in about the singing, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, if he would give in I should be very proud. I have learnt a great deal from him; I used positively to dislike him; but, now that I know him, I think him the best man in the parish. If he ever does give in—and I think he will—it will be worth anything, just because he is so independent."

"That's all very well; but what am I to do to show Harry Winburn that I mean to be his friend, if he won't take money from me?"

"You have come over to his mother's funeral—he will think more of that than of all the money you could give him; and you can show sympathy for him in a great many ways."

"Well, I must try. By the way, about his love affair; is the young lady at home? I have never seen her, you know."

"No, she is away with an aunt, looking out for a place. I have persuaded her to get one, and leave home again for the present. Her father is quite well now, and she is not wanted."

"Well, it seems I can't do any good with her, then; but could I not go and talk to her father about Harry? I might help him in that way."

"You must be very careful; Simon is such an odd-tempered old man."

"Oh, I'm not afraid; he and I are great chums, and a little soft soap will go a long way with him. Fancy, if I

could get him this very morning to 'sanction Harry's suit,' as the phrase is, what should you think of me?"

"I should think very highly of your powers of persuasion."

Not the least daunted by his cousin's misgivings, Tom started in quest of Simon, and found him at work in front of the greenhouse, surrounded by many small pots and heaps of finely sifted mould, and absorbed in his occupation.

Simon was a rough, stolid Berkshire rustic, somewhat of a tyrant in the bosom of his family, an unmanageable servant, a cross-grained acquaintance; as a citizen, stiff-necked and a grumbler, who thought that nothing ever went right in the parish; but, withal, a thoroughly honest worker; and, when allowed to go his own way—and no other way would he go, as his mistress had long since discovered—there was no man who earned his daily bread more honestly. He took a pride in his work, and the Rectory garden was always trim and well kept, and the beds bright with flowers from early spring till late autumn.

He was absorbed in what he was about, and Tom came up close to him without attracting the least sign of recognition; so he stopped, and opened the conversation.

"Good day, Simon; it's a pleasure to see a garden looking so gay as yours."

Simon looked up from his work, and, when he saw who it was, touched his battered old hat, and answered,—

"Mornin' sir! Ees, you finds me allus in blume."

"Indeed I do, Simon; but how do you manage it? I should like to tell my father's gardener."

"'Tis no use to tell un if a haven't found out for hisself. 'Tis nothing but lookin' a bit forrard and farm-yard stuff as does it."

"Well, there's plenty of farm-yard stuff at home, and yet, somehow, we never look half so bright as you do."

"May be as your gardener just takes and hits it auver the top o' the ground, and lets it lie. That's no kind o'good, that beant—'tis the roots as wants the stuff; and you med jist as well take and put a round o'beef agin my back bwone as hit the stuff auver the ground, and never see as it gets to the roots o' the plants."

"No, I don't think it can be that," said Tom, laughing; "our gardener seems always to be digging his manure in, but somehow he can't make it come out in flowers as you do."

"Ther' be mwore waays o' killin' a cat besides choking on un wi'-crame," said Simon, chuckling in his turn.

"That's true, Simon," said Tom; "the fact is, a gardener must know his business as well as you to be always in bloom, eh?"

"That's about it, sir," said Simon, on whom the flattery was beginning to tell.

Tom saw this, and thought he might now feel his way a little further with the old man.

"I'm over on a sad errand," he said; "I've been to poor Widow Winburn's funeral—she was an old friend of yours, I think?"

"Ees; I minds her long afore she wur married," said Simon turning to his pots again.

"She wasn't an old woman, after all," said Tom.

"Sixty-two year old cum Michaelmas," said Simon.

"Well, she ought to have been a strong woman for another ten years at least; why, you must be older than she by some years, Simon, and you can do a good day's work yet with any man."

Simon went on with his potting without replying except by a carefully measured grunt, sufficient to show that he had heard the remark, and was not much impressed by it.

Tom saw that he must change his attack; so, after watching Simon for a minute, he began again.

"I wonder why it is that the men of your time of life are so much stronger than the young ones in constitution. Now, I don't believe there are three young men in Englebourn who would have got over that fall you had at farmer Groves' so quick as you have; most young men would have been crippled for life by it."

"Zo 'em would, the young wosbirds. I dwon't make no account on 'em," said Simon.

"And you don't feel any the worse for it, Simon?"

"Narra mossel," replied Simon; but presently he seemed to recollect something, and added, "I wun't saay but what I feels it at times when I've got to stoop about much."

"Ah, I'm sorry to hear that Simon. Then you oughtn't to have so much stooping to do; potting, and that sort of thing, is the work for you, I should think, and just giving an eye to everything about the place. Anybody could do the digging and setting out cabbages, and your time is only wasted at it."—Tom had now found the old man's weak point.

"Ees, sir, and so I tells miss," he said "but wi' nothin' but a bit o' glass no bigger'n a cowcumber frame 'tis all as a man can do to keep a few plants alive droo' the winter."

"Of course," said Tom, looking round at the very respectable greenhouse which Simon had contemptuously likened to a cucumber-frame, "you ought to have at least another house as big as this for forcing."

"Master ain't pleased, he ain't," said Simon, "if he dwon't get his things, his spring wegetables, and his strawberries, as early as though we'd a got forcin' pits and glass like other folk. 'Tis a year and mwore since he promised as I sh'd hev glass along that ther' wall, but 'tis no nigher comin' as I can see. I be to spake to miss about it now, and, when I spakes to her, 'tis, 'Oh, Simon, we must wait till the 'spensary's 'stablished,' or 'Oh, Simon, last winter wur a werry tryin wun, and the sick club's terrible bad off for funds,'—and so we gwoes on, and med gwo on for aught as I can see, so long as there's a body sick or bad off in all the parish. And that'll be allus. For, what wi' wisitin' on 'em, and sendin' on 'em dinners, and a'al the doctor's stuff as is served out o' the 'spensary—wy, 'tis enough to keep 'em bad a'al ther lives. Ther ain't no credit in gettin' well. Ther wur no sich a caddle about sick folk when I wur a bwoy."

Simon had never been known to make such a long speech before, and Tom argued well for his negotiation.

"Well, Simon," he said, "I've been talking to my cousin, and I think she will do what you want now. The dispensary is set up, and the people are very healthy. How much glass should you want, now, along that wall?"

"A matter o' twenty fit or so," said Simon.

"I think that can be managed," said Tom; "I'll speak to my cousin about it; and then you would have plenty to do in the houses, and you'd want a regular man under you."

"Ees; 'twould take two on us reg'lar to kep things as they should be."

"And you ought to have somebody who knows what he is about. Can you think of any one who would do, Simon?"

"Ther's a young chap as works for Squire Wurley. I've heard as he wants to better hisself."

"But he isn't an Englebourn man. Isn't there any one in the parish?"

"Ne'er a one as I knows on."

"What do you think of Harry Winburn—he seems a good hand with flowers?" The words had scarcely passed his lips when Tom saw that he had made a mistake. Old Simon retired into himself at once, and a cunning, distrustful look came over his face. There was no doing anything with him. Even the new forcing house had lost its attractions for him, and Tom, after some further ineffectual attempts to bring him round, returned to the house somewhat crestfallen.

"Well, how have you succeeded?" said Katie, looking up from her work, as he came in and sat down near her table. Tom shook his head.

"I'm afraid I've made a regular hash of it," he said. "I thought at first I had quite come round the old savage by praising the garden, and promising that you would let him have a new house."

"You don't mean to say you did that?" said Katie, stopping her work.

"Indeed, but I did, though. I was drawn on, you know. I saw it was the right card to play; so I couldn't help it."

"Oh, Tom! how could you do so? We don't wan't another house the least in the world; it is only Simon's vanity. He wants to beat the gardener at the grange at the flower-shows. Every penny will have to come out of what papa allows me for the parish."

"Don't be afraid, Katie; you won't have to spend a penny. Of course I reserved a condition. The new house was to be put up if he would take Harry as an under-gardener.

"What did he say to that?"

"Well, he said nothing. I never came across such an old Turk. How you have spoiled him! If he isn't pleased, he won't take the trouble to answer you a word. I was very near telling him a piece of my mind. But he *looked* all the more. I believe he would poison Harry if he came here. What can have made him hate him so?"

"He is jealous of him. Mary and I were so foolish as to praise poor Betty's flowers before Simon, and he has never forgiven it. I think, too, that he suspects, somehow, that we talked about getting Harry here. I ought to have told you, but I quite forgot it."

"Well, it can't be helped. I don't think I can do any good in that quarter; so now I shall be off to the Grange to see what I can do there."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, Harry is afraid of being turned out of his cottage: I saw how it worried him, thinking about it; so I shall go to the Grange, and say a good word for him. Wurley can't refuse if I offer to pay the rent myself—it's only six pounds a year. Of course, I sha'n't tell Harry; and he will pay it all the same; but it may make all the difference with Wurley, who is a regular screw."

"Do you know Mr. Wurley?"

"Yes, just to speak to. He knows all about me, and he will be very glad to be civil."

"No doubt he will; but I don't like your going to his house. You don't know what a bad man he is. Nobody but men on the turf, and that sort of people, go there now; and I believe he thinks of nothing but gambling and game-preserving."

"Oh, yes; I know all about him. The county people are beginning to look shy at him; so he'll be all the more likely to do what I ask him."

"But you won't get intimate with him?"

"You needn't be afraid of that."

"It is a sad house to go to—I hope it won't do you any harm."

"Ah, Katie!" said Tom, with a smile not altogether cheerful, "I don't think you need be anxious about that. When one has been a year at Oxford, there isn't much snow left to soil; so now I am off. I must give myself plenty of time to cook Wurley."

"Well, I suppose I must not hinder you," said Katie. "I do hope you will succeed in some of your kind plans for Harry."

"I shall do my best; and it is a great thing to have somebody besides oneself to think about and try to help—some poor person—don't you think so, even for a man?"

"Of course I do. I am sure you can't be happy without it, any more than I. We shouldn't be our mother's children if we could be."

"Well, good-bye, dear; you can't think how I enjoy these glimpses of you and your work. You must give my love to Uncle Robert."

And so they bade each other adieu, lovingly, after the manner of cousins, and Tom rode away with a very soft place in his heart for his cousin Katie. It was not the least the same sort of passionate feeling of worship with which

he regarded Mary. The two feelings could lie side by side in his heart with plenty of room to spare. In fact, his heart had been getting so big in the last few weeks that it seemed capable of taking in the whole of mankind, not to mention woman. Still, on the whole, it may be safely asserted that, had matters been at all in a more forward state, and could she have seen exactly what was passing in his mind, Mary would probably have objected to the kind of affection which he felt for his cousin at this particular time. The joke about cousinly love is probably as old, and certainly as true, as Solomon's proverbs. However, as matters stood, it could be no concern of Mary's what his feelings were towards Katie, or any other person.

Tom rode in at the lodge gate of the Grange soon after eleven o'clock and walked his horse slowly through the park, admiring the slendid timber, and thinking how he should break his request to the owner of the place. But his thoughts were interrupted by the proceedings of the rabbits, which were out by hundreds all along the sides of the plantations, and round the great trees. A few of the nearest just deigned to notice him by scampering to their holes under the roots of the antlered oaks, into which some of them popped with a disdainful kick of their hind legs, while others turned round, sat up, and looked at him. As he neared the house he passed a keeper's cottage, and was saluted by the barking of dogs from the neighboring kennel; and the young pheasants ran about round some twenty hen-coops, which were arranged along opposite the door where the keeper's children were playing. The pleasure of watching the beasts and birds kept him from arranging his thoughts, and he reached the hall door without having formed the plan of his campaign.

A footman answered the bell, who doubted whether his master was down, but thought he would see the gentleman if he would send in his name. Whereupon Tom handed in his card, and, in a few minutes a rakish-looking stable boy came round after his horse, and the butler appeared with his master's compliments, and a request that he would step into the breakfast-room. Tom followed this portly personage through the large handsome hall, on the walls of which hung a buff-coat or two and some old-fashioned arms, and large paintings of dead game and fruit—through a drawing room, the furniture of which was all covered up in melan-

choly cases—into the breakfast parlor, where the owner of the mansion was seated at table in a lounging jacket. He was a man of forty or thereabouts, who would have been handsome but for the animal look about his face. His cheeks were beginning to fall into chaps, his full lips had a liquorish look about them, and bags were beginning to form under his light blue eyes. His hands were very white and delicate, and shook a little as he poured out his tea; and he was full and stout in body with small shoulders, and thin arms and legs; in short, the last man whom Tom would have chosen as bow in a pair oar. The only part of him which showed strength were his dark whiskers, which were abundant, and elaborately oiled and curled. The room was light and pleasant, with two windows looking over the park, and furnished luxuriously, in the most modern style, with all manner of easy chairs and sofas. A glazed case or two of well bound books, showed that some former owner had cared for such things; but the doors had, probably, never been opened in the present reign. The master and his usual visitors found sufficient food for the mind in the *Racing Calendar*, "Boxiana," "The Adventures of Corinthian Tom," and *Bell's Life*, which lay on a side table; or in the pictures and prints of racers, opera dancers, and steeple-chases, which hung in profusion on the walls. The breakfast table was beautifully appointed in the matter of china and plate; and delicate little rolls, neat pats of butter in ice, two silver hot dishes containing curry and broiled salmon, and a plate of fruit, piled in tempting profusion, appealed, apparently in vain, to the appetite of the lord of the feast.

"Mr. Brown, sir," said the butler, ushering in our hero to his master's presence,

"Ah, Brown, I'm very glad to see you here," said Mr. Wurley, standing up and holding out his hand. "Have any breakfast?"

"Thank you, no, I have breakfasted," said Tom, somewhat astonished at the intimacy of the greeting; but it was his cue to do the friendly thing—so he took the proffered hand, which felt very limp, and sat down by the table, looking pleasant.

"Ridden from home this morning?" said Wurley, picking over daintily some of the curry to which he had helped himself.

"No, I was at my uncle's, at Englebourn, last night. It

is very little out of the way; so I thought I would just call on my road home."

"Quite right. I'm very glad you came without ceremony. People about here are so d—d full of ceremony. It don't suit me, all that humbug. But I wish you'd just pick a bit."

"Thank you. Then I will eat some fruit," said Tom, helping himself to some of the freshly picked grapes; "how very fine these are!"

"Yes, I'm open to back my houses against the field for twenty miles round. This curry isn't fit for a pig—Take it out, and tell the cook so." The butler solemly obeyed, while his master went on with one of the frequent oaths with which he garnished his conversation. "You're right, they can't spoil the fruit. They're a set of skulking devils, are servants. They think of nothing but stuffing themselves, and how they can cheat you most, and do the least work." Saying which, he helped himself to some fruit; and the two ate their grapes for a short time in silence. But even fruit seemed to pall quickly on him, and he pushed away his plate. The butler came back with a silver tray, with soda water, and a small decanter of brandy, and long glasses on it.

"Won't you have something after your ride?" said the host to Tom;" some soda water with a dash of bingo clears one's head in the morning."

"No, thank you," said Tom, smiling, "it's bad for training."

"Ah, you Oxford men are all for training," said his host, drinking greedily of the foaming mixture which the butler handed to him. "A glass of bitter ale is what you take, eh? I know. Get some ale for Mr. Brown."

Tom felt that it would be uncivil to refuse this orthodox offer, and took his beer accordingly, after which his host produced a box of Hudson's regalias, and proposed to look at the stables. So they lighted their cigars, and went out. Mr. Wurley had taken of late to the turf, and they inspected several young horses which were entered for country stakes. Tom thought them weedy-looking animals, but patiently listened to their praises and pedigrees, upon which his host was eloquent enough; and, rubbing up his latest readings in *Bell's Life*, and the racing talk which he had been in the habit of hearing in Drysdale's rooms, managed to hold his own, and asked, with a grave face, about the

price of the Coronation colt for the next Derby, and whether Scott's lot was not the right thing to stand on for the St. Leger, thereby raising himself considerably in his host's eyes. There were no hunters in the stable, at which Tom expressed his surprise. In reply, Mr. Wurley abused the country, and declared that it was not worth riding across—the fact being that he had lost his nerve, and that the reception which he was beginning to meet with in the field, if he came out by chance, was of the coldest.

From the stables they strolled to the keeper's cottage, where Mr. Wurley called for some buckwheat and Indian corn, and began feeding the young pheasants, which were running about, almost like barn-door fowls, close to them.

"We've had a good season for the young birds," he said; "my fellow knows that part of his business, d—n him, and don't lose many. You had better bring your gun over in October; we shall have a week in the covers early in the month."

"Thank you, I shall be very glad," said Tom; "but you don't shoot these birds?"

"Shoot 'em! what the devil should I do with 'em?"

"Why, they're so tame I thought you just kept them about the house for breeding. I don't care so much for pleasant shooting; I like a good walk after a snipe, or creeping along to get a wild duck much better. There's some sport in it, or even in partridge shooting with a couple of good dogs, now—"

"You're quite wrong. There's nothing like a good dry ride in a cover with lots of game, and a fellow behind to load for you."

"Well, I must say, I prefer the open."

"You've no covers over your way, have you?"

"Not many."

"I thought so. You wait till you've had a good day in my covers, and you won't care for quartering all day over wet turnips. Besides, this sort of thing pays. They talk about pheasants costing a guinea a head on one's table. It's all stuff; at any rate, mine don't cost *me* much. In fact, I say it pays, and I can prove it."

"But you feed your pheasants?"

"Yes, just round the house for a few weeks, and I sow a little buckwheat in the covers. But they have to keep themselves pretty much, I can tell you."

"Don't the farmers object?"

"Yes, d—n them; they're never satisfied. But they don't grumble to me; they know better. There are a dozen fellows ready to take any farm that's given up, and they know it. Just get a beggar to put a hundred or two into the ground, and he won't quit hold in a hurry. Will you play a game at billiards?"

The turn which their conversation had taken hitherto had offered no opening to Tom for introducing the object of his visit, and he felt less and less inclined to come to the point. He looked his host over and over again, and the more he looked the less he fancied asking anything like a favor of him. However, as it had to be done, he thought he couldn't do better than fall into his ways for a few hours, and watch for a chance. The man seemed good natured in his way; and all his belongings—the fine park and house, and gardens and stables—were not without their effect on his young guest, It is not given to many men of twice his age to separate a man from his possessions, and look at him apart from them. So he yielded easily enough, and they went to billiards in a fine room opening out of the hall; and Tom, who was very fond of the game, soon forgot everything in the pleasure of playing on such a table.

It was not a bad match. Mr. Wurley understood the game far better than his guest, and could give him advice as to what side to put on and how to play for cannons. This he did in a patronizing way, but his hand was unsteady and his nerve bad. Tom's good eye and steady hand, and the practice he had had at the St. Ambrose pool-table, gave him considerable advantage in the hazards. And so they played on, Mr. Wurley condescending to bet only half-a-crown a game, at first giving ten points, and then five, at which latter odds Tom managed to be two games ahead when the butler announced lunch, at two o'clock.

"I think I must order my horse," said Tom, putting on his coat.

"No, curse it, you must give me my revenge. I'm always five points better after lunch, and after dinner I could give you fifteen points. Why shouldn't you stop and dine and sleep? I expect some men to dinner."

"Thank you, I must get home to-day."

"I should like you to taste my mutton; I never kill it under five years old. You don't get that every day."

Tom, however, was proof against the mutton; but consented to stay till towards the hour when the other guests were expected, finding that his host had a decided objection to be left alone. So after lunch, at which Mr. Wurley drank the better part of a bottle of old sherry to steady his nerves, they returned again to billiards and Hudson's regalias.

They played on for another hour; and, though Mr. Wurley's hand was certainly steadier, the luck remained with Tom. He was now getting rather tired of playing, and wanted to be leaving, and he began to remember the object of his visit again. But Mr. Wurley was nettled at being beaten by a boy, as he counted his opponent, and wouldn't hear of leaving off. So Tom played on carelessly game after game, and was soon again only two games ahead. Mr. Wurley's temper was recovering, and Tom protested that he must go. Just one game more, his host urged, and Tom consented. Wouldn't he play for a sovereign? No. So they played double or quits; and after a sharp struggle Mr. Wurley won the game, at which he was highly elated, and talked again grandly of the odds he could give after dinner.

Tom felt that it was now or never, and so, as he put on his coat, he said,—

"Well, I'm much obliged to you for a very pleasant day, Mr. Wurley."

"I hope you'll come over again, and stay and sleep. I shall always be glad to see you. It is so cursed hard to keep somebody always going in the country."

"Thank you; I should like to come again. But now I want to ask a favor of you before I go."

"Eh, well, what is it?" said Mr. Wurley, whose face and manner became suddenly anything but encouraging.

"There's that cottage of yours, the one at the corner of Englebourn copse, next the village."

"The woodman's house, I know," said Mr. Wurley.

"The tenant is dead, and I want you to let it to a friend of mine; I'll take care the rent is paid."

Mr. Wurley pricked up his ears at this announcement. He gave a sharp look at Tom; and then bent over the table, made a stroke, and said, "Ah, I heard the old woman was dead. Who's your friend, then?"

"Well, I mean her son," said Tom, somewhat embarrass-

ed; "he's an active young fellow, and will make a good tenant; I'm sure."

"I daresay," said Mr. Wurley, with a leer; "and I suppose there's a sister to keep house for him, eh?"

"No, but he wants to get married."

"Wants to get married, eh?" said Mr. Wurley, with another leer and oath. "You're right; that's a deal safer kind of thing for you."

"Yes," said Tom, resolutely disregarding the insinuation, which he could not help feeling was intended; "it will keep him steady, and if he can get the cottage it might make all the difference. There wouldn't be much trouble about the marriage then, I dare say."

"You'll find it a devilish long way. You're quite right, mind you, not to get them settled close at home; but Englebourn is too far, I should say."

"What does it matter to me?"

"Oh, you're tired of her! I see. Perhaps it won't be too far, then."

"Tired of her! who do you mean?"

"Ha, ha!" said Mr. Wurley, looking up from the table over which he was leaning, for he went on knocking the balls about; "devilish well acted! But you needn't try to come the old soldier over me. I'm not quite such a fool as that."

"I don't know what you mean by coming the old soldier. I only asked you to let the cottage, and I will be responsible for the rent. I'll pay in advance if you like."

"Yes, you want me to let the cottage for you to put in this girl?"

"I beg your pardon," said Tom, interrupting him, and scarcely able to keep his temper; "I told you it was for this young Winburn."

"Of course you told me so. Ha, ha!"

"And you don't believe me."

"Come, now, all's fair in love and war. But, I tell you, you needn't be mealy-mouthed with me. You don't mind his living there; he's away at work all day, eh? and his wife stays at home."

"Mr. Wurley, I give you my honor I never saw the girl in my life that I know of, and I don't know that she will marry him."

"What did you talk about your friend for, then?" said

Mr. Wurley, stopping and staring at Tom, curiosity beginning to mingle with his look of cunning unbelief.

"Because I meant just what I said."

"And the friend, then?"

"I have told you several times that this young Winburn is the man."

"What, *your friend?*"

"Yes, my friend," said Tom; and he felt himself getting red at having to call Harry his friend in such company. Mr. Wurley looked at him for a few moments, and then took his leg off the billiard table, and came round to Tom with the sort of patronizing air with which he had lectured him on billiards.

"I say, Brown, I'll give you a piece of advice," he said. "You're a young fellow, and haven't seen anything of the world Oxford's all very well, but it isn't the world. Now I tell you, a young fellow can't do himself greater harm than getting into low company and talking as you have been talking. It might ruin you in the county. That sort of radical stuff won't do, you know, calling a farm laborer your friend."

Tom chafed at this advice from a man who, he well knew, was notoriously in the habit of entertaining at his house, and living familiarly with, betting men and trainers, and all the riff-raff of the turf. But he restrained himself by a considerable effort, and, instead of retorting, as he felt inclined to do, said, with an attempt to laugh it off, "Thank you, I don't think there's much fear of me turning radical. But will you let me the cottage?"

"My agent manages all that. We talked about pulling it down. The cottage is in my preserves, and I don't mean to have some poaching fellow there to be sneaking out at night after my pheasants."

"But his grandfather and great-grandfather lived there."

"I dare say, but it's my cottage."

"But surely that gives him a claim to it."

"D—n it! it's my cottage. You're not going to tell me I mayn't do what I like with it, I suppose."

"I only said that his family having lived there so long gives him a claim."

"A claim to what? These are some more of your cursed radical notions. I think they might teach you something better at Oxford."

Tom was now perfectly cool, but withal in such a tremendous fury of excitement that he forgot the interests of his client altogether.

"I came here, sir," he said, very quietly and slowly, "not to request your advice on my own account, or your opinion on the studies of Oxford, valuable as no doubt they are; I came to ask you to let this cottage to me, and I wish to have your answer."

"I'll be d—d if I do; there's my answer."

"Very well," said Tom; "then I have only to wish you good morning. I am sorry to have wasted a day in the company of a man who sets up for a country gentleman with the tongue of a Thames bargee and the heart of a Jew pawn-broker."

Mr. Wurley rushed to the bell and rang it furiously. "By—!" he almost screamed, shaking his fist at Tom, "I'll have you horsewhipped out of my house;" and then poured forth a flood of uncomplimentary slang, ending in another pull at the bell, and "By—! I'll have you horsewhipped out of my house."

"You had better try it on—you and your flunkeys together," said Tom, taking a cigar-case out of his pocket and lighting up, the most defiant and exasperating action he could think of on the spur of the moment. "Here's one of them; so I'll leave you to give him his orders, and wait five minutes in the hall, where there's more room." And so, leaving the footman gaping at his lord, he turned on his heel, with the air of Bernardo del Carpio after he had bearded King Alphonso, and walked into the hall.

He heard men running to and fro, and doors banging, as he stood there looking at the old buff-coats, and rather thirsting for a fight. Presently a door opened, and the portly butler shuffled in, looking considerably embarrassed, and said,—

"Please, sir, to go out quiet, else he'll be having one of his fits."

"Your master, you mean."

"Yes, sir," said the butler, nodding, "D. T., sir. After one of his rages the black dog comes, and it's hawful work; so I hope you'll go, sir."

"Very well, of course I'll go. I don't want to give him a fit." Saying which, Tom walked out of the hall-door, and leisurely round to the stables, where he found already signs of commotion. Without regarding them, he gets his

horse saddled and bridled, and, after looking him over carefully, and patting him, and feeling his girths in the yard, in the presence of a cluster of retainers of one sort or another, who were gathered from the house and offices, and looking sorely puzzled whether to commence hostilities or not, mounted and walked quietly out.

After his anger had been a little cooled by the fresh air of the wild country at the back of Hawk's Lynch, which he struck into on his way home soon after leaving the park, it suddenly occurred to him that, however satisfactory to himself the results of his encounter with this unjust landlord might seem, they would probably prove anything but agreeable to the would-be tenant, Harry Winburn. In fact, as he meditated on the matter, it became clear to him that in the course of one morning he had probably exasperated old Simon against his aspirant son-in-law, and put a serious spoke in Harry's love-wheel, on the one hand, while on the other, he had insured his speedy expulsion from his cottage, if not the demolition of that building. Whereupon he became somewhat low under the conviction that his friendship, which was to work such wonders for the said Harry and deliver him out of all his troubles, had as yet only made his whole look-out in the world very much darker and more dusty. In short, as yet he had managed to do considerably less than nothing for his friend, and he felt very small before he got home that evening. He was far, however, from being prepared for the serious way in which his father looked upon his day's proceedings. Mr. Brown was sitting by himself after dinner when his son turned up, and had to drink several extra glasses of port to keep himself decently composed, while Tom narrated the events of the day in the intervals of his attacks on the dinner, which was brought back for him. When the servant had cleared away, Mr Brown proceeded to comment on the history in a most decided manner.

Tom was wrong to go to the Grange in the first instance, and this part of the homily was amplified by a discourse on the corruption of the turf in general, and the special curse of small country races in particular, which such men as Wurley supported, and which, but for them, would cease. Racing, which used to be the pastime of great people, who could well afford to spend a few thousands a year on their pleasure, had now mostly fallen into the hands of the very worst and lowest men of all classes, most of whom would

ot scruple—as Mr. Brown strongly put it—to steal a cop-
er out of a blind beggar's hat. If he must go, at any rate
e might have done his errand and come away, instead of
aying there all day accepting the man's hospitality. Mr.
rown himself really should be much embarrassed to know
hat to do if the man should happen to attend the next
ssions or assizes.

But, above all, having accepted his hospitality, to turn
und at the end and insult the man in his own house? This
emed to Brown, J. P. a monstrous and astounding per-
rmance.

This new way of putting matters took Tom entirely by
rprise. He attempted a defence, but in vain. His father
lmitted that it would be a hard case if Harry were turned
ut of his cottage, but wholly refused to listen to Tom's en-
eavors to prove that a tenant in such a case had any claim
r right as against his landlord. A weekly tenant was a
eekly tenant, and no succession of weeks' holding could
ake him anything more. Tom found himself rushing into
line of argument which astonished himself and sounded
ild, but in which he felt sure there was some truth, and
hich, therefore, he would not abandon, though his father
as evidently annoyed, and called it mere mischievous senti-
ent. Each was more moved than he would have liked
o own; each in his own heart felt aggrieved and blamed
he other for not understanding him. But, though obstinate
n the general question, upon the point of his leaving the
Grange, Tom was fairly brought to shame, and gave in at
ast, and expressed his sorrow, though he could not help
aintaining that, if his father could have heard what took
lace and seen the man's manner, he would scarcely blame
im for what he had said and done. Having owned
imself in the wrong, however, there was nothing for it
ut to write an apology, the composition of which was as
isagreeable a task as had ever fallen to his lot.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MHAEN ATAN.

Has any person of any nation or language, found out
nd given to the world any occupation, work, diversion, or
ursuit, more subtlely dangerous to the susceptible youth of

both sexes than that of nutting in pairs. If so, who, where, what? A few years later in life perhaps district visiting, and attending schools together, may in certain instances be more fatal; but, in the first bright days of youth, a day's nutting against the world! A day in autumn, warm enough to make sitting in the sheltered nooks in the woods, wherever the sunshine lies, very pleasant, and yet not too warm to make exercise uncomfortable—two young people who have been thrown much together, one of whom is conscious of the state of his feelings towards the other, and is, moreover aware that his hours are numbered, and that in a few days at furthest they will be separated for many months, that persons in authority on both sides are beginning to suspect something (as is apparent from the difficulty they have had in getting away together at all on this same afternoon)—here is a conjunction of persons and circumstances, if ever there was one in the world, which is surely likely to end in a catastrophe. Indeed, so obvious to the meanest capacity is the danger of the situation, that, as Tom had in his own mind, staked his character for resolution with his private self on the keeping of his secret till after he was of age, it is hard to conceive how he can have been foolish enough to get himself into a hazel copse alone with Miss Mary on the earliest day he could manage it after the arrival of the Porters, on their visit to Mr. and Mrs. Brown. That is to say it would be hard to conceive, if it didn't just happen to be the most natural thing in the world.

For the first twenty-four hours after their meeting in the home of his fathers, the two young people, and Tom in particular, felt very uncomfortable. Mary, being a young lady of very high spirits, and, as our readers may probably have discovered, much given to that kind of conversation which borders as nearly upon what men commonly call chaff as a well-bred girl can venture on, was annoyed to find herself quite at fault in all her attempts to get her old antagonist of Commemoration to show fight. She felt in a moment how changed his manner was, and thought it by no means changed for the better. As for Tom, he felt foolish and shy at first, to an extent which drove him half wild; his words stuck in his throat, and he took to blushing again like a boy of fourteen. In fact, he got so angry with himself that he rather avoided her actual presence, though she was scarcely a moment out of his sight. Mr. Brown made the best of his son's retreat, devoted himself most ga

ntly to Mary, and was completely captivated by her before edtime on the first night of their visit. He triumphed over s wife when they were alone, and laughed at the groundssness of her suspicions. But she was by no means so tisfied on the subject as her husband.

In a day or two, however, Tom began to take heart of ace, and to find himself oftener at Mary's side, with someing to say, and more to look. But now she, in her turn, egan to be embarrassed; for all attempts to re-establish eir old footing failed, and the difficulty of finding a satisctory new one remained to be solved. So for the present ough neither of them found it quite satisfactory, they took fuge in the presence of a third party, and attached themlves to Katie, talking at one another through her. Nothg could exceed Katie's judiciousness as a medium of comunication; and through her a better understanding began establish itself, and the visit which both of them had een looking forward to so eagerly seemed likely, after all, be as pleasant in fact as it had been in anticipation. As ey became more at ease, the vigilance of Mrs. Brown nd Mrs. Porter seemed likely to revive. But in a country ouse there must be plenty of chances for young folks who ean it, to be together; and so they found and made use of eir opportunities, giving at the same time as little cause to eir natural guardians of possible for any serious interfernce. The families got on, on the whole, so well together, at the visit was prolonged from the original four or five ays to a fortnight; and this time of grace was drawing to close when the event happened which made the visit emorable to our hero.

On the morning in question, Mr. Brown arranged at reakfast that he and his wife should drive Mr. and Mrs. orter to make calls on several of the neighbors. Tom deared his intention of taking a long day after the patridges nd the young ladies were to go and make a sketch of the ouse from a point which Katie had chosen. Accordingly, rectly after luncheon, the carriage came round, and the ders departed; and the young ladies started together, carying their sketching apparatus with them.

It was probably a bad day for scent; for they had not een gone a quarter of an hour when Tom came home, deosited his gun, and followed on their steps. He found em sitting under the lee of a high bank, sufficiently inent on their drawings, but neither surprised nor sorry to

find that he had altered his mind, and come back to interrupt them. So he lay down near them, and talked of Oxford and Englebourn, and so from one thing to another, till he got upon the subject of nutting, and the sylvan beauties of a neighboring wood. Mary was getting on badly with her drawing, and jumped at the idea of a ramble in the wood; but Katie was obdurate, and resisted all their solicitations to move. She suggested, however, that they might go; and, as Tom declared that they should not be out of call, and would be back in half an hour at furthest, Mary consented; and they left the sketcher and strolled together out of the fields, and into the road, and so through a gate into the wood. It was a pleasant oak wood. The wild flowers were over, but the great masses of ferns, four or five feet high, made a grand carpet round the stems of the forest monarchs, and a fitting couch for here and there one of them which had been lately felled, and lay in fallen majesty, with bare shrouded trunk awaiting the sawyers. Further on, the hazel underwood stood thickly on each side of the green rides, down which they sauntered side by side. Tom talked of the beauty of the wood in spring-time, and the glorious succession of coloring—pale yellow, and deep blue and white, and purple—which the primroses, and hyacinths and starwort, and foxgloves gave, each in their turn, in the early year, and mourned over their absence. But Mary preferred Autumn, and would not agree with him. She was enthusiastic for ferns and heather. He gathered some sprigs of the latter for her, from a little sandy patch which they passed, and some more for his own button-hole; and then they engaged in the absorbing pursuit of nutting, and the talk almost ceased. He caught the higher branches, and bent them down to her, and watched her as she gathered them, and wondered at the ease and grace of all her movements, and the unconscious beauty of her attitudes. Soon she became more enterprising herself, end made little excursions into the copse, surmounting briers, and passing through tangled places like a Naiad, before he could be there to help her. And so they went on, along the ride and through the copse, forgetting Katie and time, till they were brought up by the fence on the further side of the wood. The ditch was on the outside, and on the inside a bank with a hedge on the top, full of tempting hazel-bushes. She clapped her hands at the sight, and, declining his help, stepped lightly up the bank and began gathering. He

urned away for a moment, jumped up the bank himself, nd followed her example.

He was standing up in the hedge, and reaching after a empting cluster of nuts, when he heard a short sharp cry of ain behind him, which made him spring backwards, and nearly miss his footing as he came to the ground. Recovering himself, and turning round, he saw Mary lying at he foot of the bank, writhing in pain.

He was at her side in a minute and dreadfully alarmed.

"Good heavens! what has happened?" he said.

"My ankle!" she cried; and the effort of speaking brought he sudden flush of pain to her brow.

"Oh! what can I do?"

"The boot! the boot!" she said, leaning forward to unlace t, and then sinking back against the bank. "It is so painful. I hope I sha'n't faint."

Poor Tom could only clasp his hands as he knelt by her, nd repeat, "Oh, what can I do—what can I do?" His itter bewilderment presently roused Mary, and her natural igh courage was beginning to master the pain.

"Have you a knife?"

"Yes—here," he said, pulling one out of his pocket, and pening it; "here it is."

"Please cut the lace."

Tom, with beating heart and trembling hand, cut the lace nd then looked up at her.

"Oh, be quick—cut it again! Don't be afraid."

He cut it again; and, without taking hold of the foot, gently pulled out the ends of the lace.

She again leaned forward, and tried to take off the boot; ut the pain was too great, and she sank back, and put her and up to her flushed face.

"May I try?—perhaps I could do it."

"Yes, pray do. Oh, I can't bear the pain!" she added, next moment; and Tom felt ready to hang himself for having been the cause of it.

"You must cut the boot off, please."

"But perhaps I may cut you. Do you really mean it?"

"Yes, really. There, take care. How your hand shakes. You will never do for a doctor."

His hand did shake, certainly. He had cut a little hole n the stocking; but, under the circumstances, we need not wonder—the situation was new and trying. Urged on by er, he cut and cut away, and, at last, off came the boot,

and her beautiful little foot lay on the green turf. She was much relieved at once, but still in great pain; and now he began to recover his head.

"The ankle should be bound up; may I try?"

"Oh, yes; but what with?"

Tom dived into his shooting-coat pocket, and produced one of the large, many-colored neck-wrappers which were fashionable at Oxford in those days.

"How lucky!" he said, as he tore it into strips. "I think this will do. Now, you'll stop me, won't you, if I hurt, or don't do it right?"

"Don't be afraid, I'm much better. Bind it tight—tighter than that."

He wound the strips as tenderly as he could round her foot and ankle, with hands all alive with nerves, and wondering more and more at her courage as she kept urging him to draw the bandage tighter yet. Then, still under her direction, he fastened and pinned down the ends; and as he was rather neat with his fingers, from the practice of tying flies and splicing rods and bats, produced, on the whole, a creditable sort of bandage. Then he looked up at her, the perspiration standing on his forehead, as if he had been pulling a race, and said:

"Will that do? I'm afraid it's very awkward."

"Oh, no; thank you so much! But I'm so sorry you have torn your handkerchief."

Tom made no answer to this remark, except by a look. What could he say, but that he would gladly have torn his skin off for the same purpose, if it would have been of any use. But this speech did not seem quite the thing for the moment.

"But how do you feel? Is it very painful?" he asked.

"Rather. But don't look so anxious. Indeed, it is very bearable. But what are we to do now?"

He thought for a moment, and said, with something like a sigh—

"Shall I run home, and bring the servants and a sofa, or something to carry you on?"

"No, I shouldn't like to be left here alone."

His face brightened again.

"How near is the nearest cottage?" she asked.

"There's none nearer than the one which we passed on the road—on the other side of the wood, you know."

"Then I must try to get there. You must help me up."

He sprang to his feet and stooped over her, doubting how to begin helping her. He had never felt so shy in his life. He held out his hands.

"I think you must put your arm round me," she said, after looking at him for a moment. He lifted her on to her feet.

"Now let me lean on your arm. There, I dare say I shall manage to hobble along well enough;" and she made a brave attempt to walk. But the moment the injured foot touched the ground, she stopped with a catch at her breath, and a shiver, which went through Tom like a knife; and the flush came back into her face, and she would have fallen had he not again put his arm round her waist, and held her up. "I am better again now," she said, after a second or two.

"But Mary, dear Mary, don't try to walk again. For my sake. I can't bear it."

"But what am I to do?" she said. "I must get back somehow."

"Will you let me carry you?"

She looked in his face again, and then dropped her eyes, and hesitated.

"I wouldn't offer, dear, if there were any other way. But you mustn't walk. Indeed, you must not; you may lame yourself for life."

He spoke very quietly, with his eyes fixed on the ground, though his heart was beating so that he feared she would hear it.

"Very well," she said; "but I'm very heavy."

So he lifted her gently, and stepped off down the ride, carrying his whole world in his arms, in an indescribable flutter of joy, and triumph, and fear. He had gone some forty yards or so, when he staggered, and stopped for a moment.

"Oh, pray put me down—pray do! You'll hurt yourself. I'm too heavy."

For the credit of muscular Christianity, one must say that it was not her weight, but the tumult in his own inner man, which made her bearer totter. Nevertheless, if one is wholly unused to the exercise, the carrying a healthy young English girl weighing a good eight stone, is as much as most men can conveniently manage.

"I'll just put you down for a moment," he said. "Now take care of the foot;" and he stooped and placed her

tenderly against one of the oaks which bordered the ride, standing by her side without looking at her. Neither of them spoke for a minute. Then he asked, still looking away down the ride, "How is the foot?"

"Oh, pretty well," she answered, cheerfully. "Now, leave me here, and go for help. It is absurd of me to mind being left, and you mustn't carry me any more."

He turned, and their eyes met for a moment, but that was enough.

"Are you ready?" he said.

"Yes, but take care. Don't go far. Stop directly you feel tired."

Then he lifted her again, and this time carried her without faltering, till they came to a hillock covered with soft grass. Here they rested again, and so by easy stages he carried her through the wood, and out into the road, to the nearest cottage, neither of them speaking.

An old woman came to the door in answer to his kick, and went off into ejaculations of pity and wonder in the broadest Berkshire, at seeing Master Tom and his burthen. But he pushed into the house and cut her short with—

"Now, Mrs. Pike, don't talk, that's a dear good woman, but bustle about, and bring that arm-chair here, and the other low one, with a pillow on it, for the young lady's foot to rest on."

The old woman obeyed his injunctions, except as to talking; and, while she placed the chairs and shook up the pillow, descanted on the sovereign virtues of some green oil and opodeldoc, which was as good as a charm for sprains and bruises.

Mary gave him one grateful look as he lowered her tenderly and reluctantly into the chair, and then spoke cheerfully to Mrs. Pike, who was foraging in a cupboard, to find if there was any of her famous specific in the bottom of the bottle. As he stood up, and thought what to do next, he heard the sound of distant wheels, and looking through the window saw the carriage coming homewards. It was a sorrowful sight to him.

"Now, Mrs. Pike," he said, "never mind the oil. Here's the carriage coming; just step out and stop it."

The old dame scuttled out into the road. The carriage was within one hundred yards. He leant over the rough arm-chair in which Mary was leaning back, looked once more into her eyes; and then, stooping forwards, kissed her lips

and the next moment was by the side of Mrs. Pike, signalling the coachman to stop.

In the bustle which followed he stood aside, and watched Mary with his heart in his mouth. She never looked at him, but there was no anger, but only a dreamy look in her sweet face, which seemed to him a thousand times more beautiful than ever before. Then, to avoid inquiries, and to realize all that had passed in the last wonderful three hours he slipped away while they were getting her into the carriage, and wandered back into the wood, pausing at each of their halting places. At last he reached the scene of the accident, and here his cup of happiness was likely to brim over, for he found the mangled little boot and the cut lace, and securing the precious prize, hurried back home, to be in time for dinner.

Mary did not come down; but Katie, the only person of whom he dared to inquire, assured him that she was doing famously. The dinner was very embarrassing, and he had the greatest difficulty in answering the searching inquiries of his mother and Mrs. Porter, as to how, when, where, and in whose presence the accident had happened. As soon as the ladies rose, he left his father and Mr. Porter over their old port and politics, and went out in the twilight into the garden, burthened with the weight of sweet thought. He felt that he had something to do—to set himself quite right with Mary; he must speak somehow, that night, if possible, or he should not be comfortable or at peace with his conscience. There were lights in her room. He guessed by the shadows that she was lying on a couch by the open window, round which the other ladies were flitting. Presently lights appeared in the drawing-room; and, as the shutters were being closed, he saw his mother and Mrs. Porter come in, and sit down near the fire. Listening intently, he heard Katie talking in a low voice in the room above, and saw her head against the light as she sat down close to the window, probably at the head of the couch where Mary was lying. Should he call to her? If he did how could he say what he wanted to say through her?

A happy thought struck him. He turned to the flowerbeds, hunted about and gathered a bunch of heliotrope, hurried up to his room, took the sprig of heather out of his shooting coat, tied them together, caught up a reel and line from his table, and went into the room over Mary's. He threw the window open, and, leaning out, said gently,

"Katie." No answer. He repeated the name louder. No answer still, and, leaning out yet further, he saw that the window had been shut. He lowered the bunch of flowers and, swinging it backwards and forward, made it strike the window below—once, twice; at the third stroke he heard the window open.

"Katie," he whispered again, "is that you?"

"Yes, where are you? What is this?"

"For her," he said, in the same whisper. Katie untied the flowers, and he waited a few moments, and then again called her name, and she answered.

"Has she the flowers?" he asked.

"Yes, and she sends you her love, and says you are to go down to the drawing-room;" and with that the window closed, and he went down with a lightened conscience into the drawing-room, and after joining in the talk by the fire for a few minutes, took a book, and sat down at the further side of the table. Whether he ever knew what the book was may be fairly questioned, but to all appearances he was deep in the perusal of it till the tea and Katie arrived, and the gentlemen from the dining-room. Then he tried to join in the conversation again; but, on the whole, life was a burthen to him that night till he could get fairly away to his own room, and commune with himself, gazing at the yellow harvest moon, with his elbows on the window sill.

The ankle got well very quickly, and Mary was soon going about with a gold-headed stick which had belonged to Mr. Brown's father, and a limp which Tom thought the most beautiful movement he had ever seen. But, though she was about again, by no amount of patient vigilance could he now get the chance of speaking to her alone. But he consoled himself with the thought that she must understand him; if he had spoken he couldn't have made himself clearer.

And now the Porters' visit was all but over, and Katie and her father left for Englebourn. The Porters were to follow the next day, and promised to drive round and stop at the Rectory for lunch. Tom petitioned for a seat in their carriage to Englebourn. He had been devoting himself to Mrs. Porter ever since the accident, and had told her a good deal about his own early life. His account of his early friendship for Betty and her son, and the renewal of it on the day he left Barton Manor, had interested her, and she was moreover not insensible to his assiduous and re-

spectful attentions to herself, which had of late been quite marked: she was touched too at his anxiety to hear all about her boys, and how they were getting on at school. So on the whole Tom was in high favor with her, and she most graciously assented to his occupying the fourth seat in their barouche. She was not without her suspicions of the real state of the case with him; but his behavior had been so discreet that she had no immediate fears; and, after all, if anything should come of it some years hence her daughter might do worse. In the meantime she would see plenty of society in London; where Mr. Porter's vocations kept him during the greater part of the year.

They reached Englebourn after a pleasant long morning's drive; and Tom stole a glance at Mary and felt that she understood him, as he pointed out the Hawk's Lynch and the clump of scotch firs to her mother; and told how you might see Barton from the top of it, and how he loved the place, and the old trees, and the view.

Katie was at the door ready to receive them, and carried off Mary and Mrs. Porter to her own room. Tom walked round the garden with Mr. Porter, and then sat in the drawing-room, and felt melancholy. He roused himself, however, when the ladies came down and luncheon was announced. Mary was full of her reminiscences of the Englebourn people, and especially of poor Mrs. Winburn and her son, in whom she had begun to take a deep interest, perhaps from overhearing some of Tom's talk to her mother. So Harry's story was canvassed again, and Katie told them how he had been turned out of his cottage, and how anxious she was as to what would come of it.

"And is he going to marry your gardener's daughter after all?" asked Mrs. Porter.

"I am afraid there is not much chance of it," said Katie; "I cannot make Martha out."

"Is she at home, Katie?" asked Mary; "I should like to see her again. I took a great fancy to her when I was here."

"Yes, she is at the lodge. We will walk there after luncheon."

So it was settled that the carriage should pick them up at the lodge; and soon after luncheon, while the horses were being put to, the whole party started for the lodge after saying good-bye to Mr. Winter, who retired to his room much fatigued by his unwonted hospitality.

Old Simon s wife answered their knock at the lodge door, and they all entered, and Mrs. Porter paid her compliments on the cleanliness of the room.

Then Mary said, "Is your daughter at home, Mrs. Gibbons?"

"Ees, miss, someweres handy," replied Mrs. Gibbons; "her hav'n't been gone out, not dree minnit."

"I should like so much to say good-bye to her," said Mary. "We shall be leaving Barton soon, and I shall not see her again till next summer."

"Lor bless'ee, miss, 'tis werry good ov'ee," said the old dame, very proud; "do'ee set down then while I gees her a call." And with that she hurried out of the door which led through the back kitchen into the little yard behind the lodge, and the next moment they heard her calling out—

"Patty, Patty, wher bist got to? Come in and see the gentlefolk."

The name which the old woman was calling out made Tom start.

"I thought you said her name was Martha," said Mrs. Porter.

"Patty is short for Martha in Berkshire," said Katie, laughing.

"And Patty is such a pretty name. I wonder you don't call her Patty," said Mary.

"We had a housemaid of the same name a year or two ago, and it made such a confusion—and when one once gets used to a name it is so hard to change—so she has always been called Martha."

"Well, I'm all for Patty; don't you think so?" said Mary, turning to Tom.

The sudden introduction of a name which he had such reasons for remembering, the memories and fears which it called up—above all, the bewilderment which he felt at hearing it tossed about and canvassed by Mary in his presence, as if there were nothing more in it than in any other name—confused him so that he floundered and blundered in his attempt to answer, and at last gave it up altogether. She was surprised, and looked at him inquiringly. His eyes fell before hers, and he turned away to the window, and looked at the carriage, which had just drawn up at the lodge door. He had scarcely time to think how foolish he was to be so moved, when he heard the back-kitchen door open again, and the old woman and her daughter come in,

He turned round sharply, and there on the floor of the room, courtseying to the ladies, stood the ex-barmaid of the "Choughs." His first impulse was to hurry away—she was looking down, and he might not be recognized; his next, to stand his ground, and take whatever might come. Mary went up to her and took her hand, saying that she could not go away without coming to see her. Patty looked up to answer, and, glancing round the room, caught sight of him.

He stepped forward, and then stopped and tried to speak, but no words would come. Patty looked at him, dropped Mary's hand, blushed up to the roots of her hair as she looked timidly round at the wondering spectators, and, putting her hands to her face, ran out of the back door again.

"Lawk a massy! what ever can ha' cum to our Patty?" said Mrs. Gibbons, following her out.

"I think we had better go," said Mr. Porter, giving his arm to his daughter, and leading her to the door, "Good-bye, Katie; shall we see you again at Barton?"

"I don't know, uncle," Katie answered, following with Mrs. Porter, in a state of sad bewilderment.

Tom, with his brain swimming, got out a few stammering farewell words, which Mr. and Mrs. Porter received with marked coldness as they stepped into their carriage. Mary's face was flushed and uneasy, but at her he scarcely dared to steal a look, and to her was quite unable to speak a word.

Then the carriage drove off, and he turned, and found Katie standing at his side, her eyes full of serious wonder. His fell before them.

"My dear Tom," she said, "what is all this? I thought you had never seen Martha?"

"So I thought—I don't know—I can't talk now—I'll explain all to you—don't think very badly of me, Katie—God bless you!" with which words he strode away, while she looked after him with increasing wonder, and then turned and went into the lodge.

He hastened away from the Rectory and down the village street, taking the road home mechanically, but otherwise wholly unconscious of roads and men. David, who was very anxious to speak to him about Harry, stood at his door making signs to him to stop, in vain; and then gave chase, calling out after him, till he saw that all at-

tempts to attract his notice were useless, and so ambled back to his shop-board much troubled in mind.

The first object which recalled Tom at all to himself was the little white cottage looking out of Englebourn copse towards the village, in which he had sat by poor Betty's death-bed. The garden was already getting wild and tangled, and the house seemed uninhabited. He stopped for a moment and looked at it with bitter searchings of heart. Here was the place where he had taken such a good turn, as he had fondly hoped—in connection with the then inmates of which he had made the strongest good resolutions he had ever made in his life perhaps. What was the good of his trying to befriend anybody? His friendship turned to a blight; whatever he had as yet tried to do for Harry had only injured him, and now how did they stand? Could they ever be friends again after that day's discovery? To do him justice, the probable ruin of all his own prospects, the sudden coldness of Mr. and Mrs. Porter's looks, and Mary's averted face, were not the things he thought of first, and did not trouble him most. He thought of Harry, and shuddered at the wrong he had done him as he looked at his deserted home. The door opened and a figure appeared. It was Mr. Wurley's agent, the lawyer who had been employed by farmer Tester in his contest with Harry and his mates about the pound. The man of law saluted him with a smirk of scarcely concealed triumph, and then turned into the house again and shut the door, as if he did not consider further communication necessary or safe. Tom turned with a muttered imprecation on him and his master. and hurried away along the lane which led to the heath. The Hawk's Lynch lay above him, and he climbed the side mechanically and sat himself again on the old spot.

He sat for some time looking over the landscape, graven on his mind as it was by his former visit, and bitterly, oh, how bitterly! did the remembrance of that visit, and of the exultation and triumph which then filled him, and carried him away over the heath with a shout towards his home, come back on him. He could look out from his watch-tower no longer, and lay down with his face between his hands on the turf, and groaned as he lay.

But his good angel seemed to haunt the place, and soon the cold fit began to pass away, and better and more hopeful thoughts to return. After all what had he done since

his last visit to that place to be ashamed of? Nothing. His attempts to do Harry service, unlucky as they had proved, had been honest. Had he become less worthy of the love which had first consciously mastered him there some four weeks ago? No; he felt on the contrary, that it had already raised him, and purified him, and made a man of him. But this last discovery, how could he ever get over that? Well, after all, the facts were just the same as before; only now they had come out. It was right that they should have come out; better for him and for every one that they should be known and faced. He was ready to face them, to abide any consequences that they might now bring in their train. His heart was right towards Mary, towards Patty, towards Harry—that he felt sure of. And, if so, why should he despair of either his love or his friendship coming to a good end?

And so he sat up again, and looked out bravely towards Barton, and began to consider what was to be done. His eyes rested on the Rectory. That was the first place to begin with. He must set himself right with Katie—let her know the whole story. Through her he could reach all the rest, and do whatever must be done to clear the ground and start fresh again.

At first he thought of returning to her at once, and rose to go down to Englebourn. But anything like retracing his steps was utterly distasteful to him just then. Before him he saw light, dim enough as yet, but still a dawning; towards that he would press, leaving everything behind him to take care of itself. So he turned northwards, and struck across the heath at his best pace. The violent exercise almost finished his cure, and his thoughts became clearer and more hopeful as he neared home. He arrived there as the household was going to bed, and found a letter waiting for him. It was from Hardy, saying that Blake had left him, and he was now thinking of returning to Oxford, and would come for his long talked of visit to Berkshire, if Tom was still at home, and in the mind to receive him.

Never was a letter more opportune. Here was the tried friend on whom he could rely for help and advice and sympathy—who knew all the facts too from beginning to end! His father and mother were delighted to hear that they should now see the friend of whom he had spoken so much. So he went up stairs and wrote an answer, which set Har-

dy to work packing his portmanteau in the far west, and brought him speedily to the side of his friend under the lee of the Berkshire hills.

CHAPTER XXXV.

SECOND YEAR.

For some days after his return home—in fact, until his friend's arrival, Tom was thoroughly beaten down and wretched, notwithstanding his efforts to look hopefully forward, and keep up his spirits. His usual occupations were utterly distasteful to him; and, instead of occupying himself, he sat brooding over his late misfortune, and hopelessly puzzling his head as to what he could do to set matters right. The conviction in which he always landed was that there was nothing to be done, and that he was a desolate and blighted being, deserted of gods and men. Hardy's presence and company soon shook him out of this maudlin nightmare state, and he began to recover as soon as he had his old sheet-anchor friend to hold on to and consult with. Their consultations were held chiefly in the intervals of woodcraft, in which they spent most of their hours between breakfast and dinner. Hardy did not take out a certificate and wouldn't shoot without one; so, as the best autumn exercise, they selected a tough old pollard elm, infinitely ugly, with knotted and twisted roots, curiously difficult to get at and cut through, which had been long marked as a blot by Mr. Brown, and condemned to be felled as soon as there was nothing more pressing for his men to do. But there was always something of more importance; so that the cross-grained old tree might have remained until this day had not Hardy and Tom pitched on him as a foeman worthy of their axes. They shoveled, and picked, and hewed away with great energy. The woodman who visited them occasionally, and who, on examining their first efforts, had remarked that the severed roots looked a little "as tho' the dogs had been a gnawin' at 'em," began to hold them in respect, and to tender his advice with some deference. By the time the tree was felled and shrouded Tom was in a convalescent state.

"You don't think Katie can be right then? She must have capital opportunities of judging, you know, dear."

"But she is no judge. What can a girl like Katie know about such things?"

"Well, dear, do you know I really cannot think there was anything very wrong, though I did think so at first, I own."

"But I find that his character was bad—decidedly bad—always. Young St. Cloud didn't like to say much to me; which was natural, of course. Young men never like to betray one another; but I could see what he thought. He is a right-minded young man and very agreeable."

"I do not take to him very much."

"His connexions and prospects, too, are capital. I sometimes think he has a fancy for Mary. Haven't you remarked it?"

"Yes, dear. But as to the other matter? Shall you ask him here?"

"Well, dear, I do not think there is any need. He is only in town, I suppose, for a short time, and it is not at all likely that we should know where he is, you see."

"But if he should call?"

"Of course then we must be civil. We can consider then what is to be done."

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE INTERCEPTED LETTER-BAG.

"DEAR KATIE,—At home, you see, without having answered your last kind letter of counsel and sympathy. But I couldn't write in town, I was in such a queer state all the time. I enjoyed nothing, not even the match at Lord's, or the race; only walking at night in the square, and watching her window, and seeing her at a distance in Rotten Row.

"I followed your advice at last, though it went against the grain uncommonly. It did seem so unlike what I had a right to expect from them—after all the kindness my father and mother had shown them when they came into our neighborhood, and after I had been so intimate there, running in and out just like a son of their own—that they

"And is it all right, eh? Has she got my letter?"

"Yes, she had had your letter."

"And you think she is satisfied?"

"Satisfied? No, you can't expect her to be satisfied."

"I mean, is she satisfied that it isn't so bad after all as it looked the other day? What does Katie think of me?"

"I think she is still very fond of you, but that she has been puzzled and outraged by this discovery, and cannot get over it all at once."

"Why didn't you tell her the whole story from beginning to end?"

"I tried to do so as well as I could."

"Oh, but I can see you haven't done it. She doesn't really understand how it is."

"Perhaps not; but you must remember it is an awkward subject to be talking about to a young woman. I would sooner stand another fellowship examination than go through it again."

"Thank you, old fellow," said Tom, laying his hand on Hardy's shoulder; "I feel that I'm unreasonable and impatient; but you can excuse it; you know that I don't mean it."

"Don't say another word; I only wish I could have done more for you."

"But what do you suppose Katie thinks of me?"

"Why, you see, it sums itself up in this; she sees that you have been making serious love to Patty, and have turned the poor girl's head, more or less, and that now you are in love with somebody else. Why, put it how we will, we can't get out of that. There are the facts, pure and simple, and she wouldn't be half a woman if she didn't resent it."

"But it's hard lines, too, isn't it, old fellow? No, I won't say that? I deserve it all, and much worse. But you think I may come round all right?"

"Yes, all in good time. I hope there's no danger in any other quarter?"

"Goodness knows. There's the rub, you see. She will go back to town disgusted with me. I sha'n't see her again, and she won't hear of me for I don't know how long; and she will be meeting heaps of men. Has Katie been over to Barton?"

"Yes; she was there last week, just before they left."

"Well, what happened?"

"She wouldn't say much; but I gathered that they are very well."

"Oh, yes, bother it. Of course they are very well. But didn't she talk to Katie about what happened last week?"

"Of course she did. What else should they talk about?"

"But you don't know what they said?"

"No. But you may depend on it that Miss Winter will be your friend. My dear fellow there is nothing for it but time."

"Well, I suppose not," said Tom, with a groan. "Do you think I should call and see Katie?"

"No; I think better not."

"Well, then, we may as well get back," said Tom, who was not sorry for his friend's decision. So they paid their bill and started for home, taking the Hawk's Lynch on the way, that Hardy might see the view.

"And what did you find out about young Winburn?" he said, as they passed down the street.

"Oh, no good," said Tom; "he was turned out, as I thought, and has gone to live with an old woman on the heath here, who is no better than she should be; and none of the farmers will employ him."

"You didn't see him, I suppose?"

"No; he is away with some of the heath people, hawking besoms and chairs about the country. They make them when there is no harvest work, and loaf about in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, and other counties, selling them."

"No good will come of that sort of life, I'm afraid."

"No; but what is he to do?"

"I called at the lodge as I came away, and saw Patty and her mother. It's all right in that quarter. The old woman doesn't seem to think anything of it, and Patty is a good girl, and will make Harry Winburn, or anybody else, a capital wife. Here are your letters."

"And the locket?"

"I quite forgot it. Why didn't you remind me of it? You talked of nothing but the letters this morning."

"I'm glad of it. It can do no harm now, and as it is worth something, I should have been ashamed to take it back. I hope she'll put Harry's hair in it soon. Did she seem to mind giving up the letters?"

"Not very much. No, you are lucky there. She will get over it."

"But you told her that I am her friend for life, and that she is to let me know if I can ever do anything for her?"

"Yes. And now I hope this is the last job of the kind I shall ever have to do for you."

"But what bad luck it has been? If I had only seen her before, or known who she was, nothing of all this would have happened."

To this Hardy made no reply; and the subject was not alluded to again in their walk home.

A day or two afterwards they returned to Oxford—Hardy to begin his work as fellow and assistant-tutor of the College, and Tom to see whether he could not make a better hand of his second year than he had of his first. He began with a much better chance of doing so, for he was thoroughly humbled. The discovery that he was not altogether such a hero as he had fancied himself, had dawned upon him very distinctly by the end of his first year; and the events of the long vacation had confirmed the impression, and pretty well taken all the conceit out of him for the time. The impotency of his own will, even when he was bent on doing the right thing, his want of insight and foresight in whatever matter he took in hand, the unruliness of his temper and passions just at the moments when it behooved him to have them most thoroughly in hand and under control, were a set of disagreeable facts which had been driven well home to him. The results, being even such as we have seen, he did not much repine at, for he felt he had deserved them; and there was a sort of grim satisfaction, dreary as the prospect was, in facing them, and taking his punishment like a man. This was what he had felt at the first blush on the Hawk's Lynch; and, as he thought over matters again by his fire, with his oak sported, on the first evening of term, he was still in the same mind. This was clearly what he had to do now. How to do it, was the only question.

At first he was inclined to try to set himself right with the Porters and the Englebourn circle, by writing further explanations and confessions to Katie. But, on trying his hand at a letter, he found that he could not trust himself. The temptation of putting everything in the best point of view for himself was too great; so he gave up the attempt, and merely wrote a few lines to David, to remind him that he was always ready and anxious to do all he could for his friend, Harry Winburn, and to beg that he might have news

of anything which happened to him, and how he was getting on. He did not allude to what had lately happened, for he did not know whether the facts had become known, and was in no hurry to open the subject himself.

Having finished his letter, he turned again to his meditations over the fire, and, considering that he had some little right to reward resolution, took off the safety valve, and allowed the thoughts to bubble up freely which were always underlying all others that passed through his brain, and making constant low, delicious, but just now somewhat melancholy music, in his head and heart. He gave himself up to thinking of Mary, and their walk in the wood, and the sprained ankle, and all the sayings and doings of that eventful autumn day. And then he opened his desk, and examined certain treasures therein concealed, including a withered rose-bud, a sprig of heather, a cut boot-lace, and a scrap or two of writing. Having gone through some extravagant forms of worship, not necessary to be specified, he put them away. Would it ever all come right?

He made his solitary tea, and sat down again to consider the point. But the point would not be considered alone. He began to feel more strongly what he had had several hints of already, that there was a curiously close connexion between his own love story and that of Harry Winburn and Patty—that he couldn't separate them, even in his thoughts. Old Simon's tumble, which had recalled his daughter from Oxford at so critical a moment for him; Mary's visit to Englebourn at this very time; the curious yet natural series of little accidents which had kept him in ignorance of Patty's identity until the final catastrophe—then, again, the way in which Harry Winburn and his mother had come across him on the very day of his leaving Barton; the fellowship of a common mourning which had seemed to bind them together so closely; and this last discovery, which he could not help fearing must turn Harry into a bitter enemy, when he heard the truth, as he must, sooner or later—as all these things passed before him, he gave in to a sort of superstitious feeling that his own fate hung, in some way or another, upon that of Harry Winburn. If he helped on his suit, he was helping on his own; but whether he helped on his own or not, was, after all, not that which was uppermost in his thoughts. He was much changed in this respect since he last sat in those rooms, just after his first days with her. Since then an angel had met

him, and had "touched the cord of self, which, trembling," was passing "in music out of sight."

The thought of Harry and his trials enabled him to indulge in some good honest indignation, for which there was no room in his own case. That the prospects in life of such a man should be in the power, to a great extent, of such people as Squire Wurley and farmer Tester; that, because he happened to be poor, he should be turned out of the cottage where his family had lived for a hundred years, at a week's notice, through the caprice of a drunken gambler; that, because he had stood up for his rights, and had thereby offended the worst farmer in the parish, he should be a marked man, and unable to get work—these things appeared so monstrous to Tom, and made him so angry, that he was obliged to get up and stamp about the room. And from the particular case he very soon got to generalizations.

Questions which had before now puzzled him gained a new significance every minute, and became real to him. Why a few men should be rich, and all the rest poor; above all, why he should be one of the few? Why the mere possession of property should give a man power over all his neighbors? Why poor men who were ready and willing to work should only be allowed to work as a sort of favor, and should after all get the merest tithe of what their labor produced, and be tossed aside as soon as their work was done, or no longer required? These, and other such problems, rose up before him, crude and sharp, asking to be solved. Feeling himself quite unable to give any but one answer to them—viz. that he was getting out of his depth and that the whole business was in a muddle—he h[illegible] course to his old method when in difficulties, and putting on his cap, started off to Hardy's rooms to talk the matter over and see whether he could not get some light on it from that quarter.

He returned in an hour or so, somewhat less troubled in his mind, inasmuch as he had found his friend in pretty much the same state of mind on such topics as himself. But one step he had gained. Under his arm he carried certain books from Hardy's scanty library, the perusal of which he hoped, at least, might enable him sooner or later to feel that he had got on to some sort of firm ground. At any rate Hardy had advised him to read them; so, without more ado he drew his chair to the table and began to look into them.

This glimpse of the manner in which Tom spent the first

evening of his second year at Oxford, will enable intelligent readers to understand why, though he took to reading far more kindly and earnestly than he had ever done before, he made no great advance in the proper studies of the place. Not that he wholly neglected these, for Hardy kept him pretty well up to the collar, and he passed his little go creditably, and was fairly placed at the college examinations. In some of the books which he had to get up for lectures he was really interested. The politics of Athens, the struggle between the Roman plebs and patricians, Mons Sacer and the Agrarian Laws—these began to have a new meaning to him, but chiefly because they bore more or less on the great Harry Winburn problem; which problem, indeed, for him had now fairly swelled into the condition-of-England problem, and was becoming every day more and more urgent and importunate, shaking many old beliefs, and leading him whither he knew not.

This very matter of leading was a sore trial to him. The further he got on his new road the more he felt the want of guidance—the guidance of some man; for that of books he soon found to be bewildering. His college tutor, whom he consulted, only deprecated the waste of time; but on finding it impossible to dissuade him, at last recommended the economic works of that day as the proper well springs of truth on such matters. To them Tom accordingly went, and read with the docility and faith of youth, bent on learning and feeling itself in the presence of men who had, or assumed, the right of speaking with authority.

And they spoke to him with authority, and he read on, believing much and hoping more; but somehow they did not really satisfy him, though they silenced him for the time. It was not the fault of the books, most of which laid down clearly enough, that what they professed to teach was the science of man's material interests, and the laws of the making and employment of capital. But this escaped him in his eagerness, and he wandered up and down their pages in search of quite another science, and of laws with which they did not meddle. Nevertheless, here and there they seemed to touch upon what he was in search of. He was much fascinated, for instance, by the doctrine of "the greatest happiness of the greatest number," and for its sake swallowed for a time, though not without wry faces, the dogmas, that self-interest is the true pivot of all social action, that population has a perpetual tendency to outstrip

the means of living, and that to establish a preventive check on population is the duty of all good citizens. And so he lived on for some time in a dreary uncomfortable state, fearing for the future of his country, and with little hope about his own. But, when he came to take stock of his newly acquired knowledge, to weigh it and measure it, and found it to consist of a sort of hazy conviction that society would be all right and ready for the millennium, when every man could do what he liked, and nobody could interfere with him, and there should be a law against marriage, the result was more than he could stand. He roused himself, and shook himself, and began to think. "Well, these my present teachers are very clever men, and well-meaning men, too. I see all that; but, if their teaching is only to land me here, why it was scarcely worth while going through so much to get so little."

Casting about still for guidance, Grey occurred to him. Grey was in residence as a bachelor, attending divinity lectures, and preparing for ordination. He was still working hard at the night-school, and Tom had been there once or twice to help him when the curate was away. In short he was in very good books with Grey, who had got the better of his shyness with him. He saw that Tom was changed and sobered, and in his heart hoped some day to wean him from the pursuits of the body, to which he was still fearfully addicted, and to bring him into the fold. This hope was not altogether unfounded; for, notwithstanding the strong bias against them which Tom had brought with him from school, he was now at times much attracted by many of the High Church doctrines, and the men who professed them. Such men as Grey he saw did really believe something, and were in earnest about carrying their beliefs into action. The party might and did comprise many others of the weakest sort, who believed and were in earnest about nothing, but who liked to be peculiar. Nevertheless, while he saw it laying hold of many of the best men of his time, it is not to be wondered at that he was drawn towards it. Some help might lie in these men if he could only get at it!

So he propounded his doubts and studies, and their results to Grey. But it was a failure. Grey felt no difficulty or very little, in the whole matter; but Tom found that it was because he believed the world to belong to the devil. "*Laissez faire*," "buying cheap and selling dear," Greek held might be good enough for laws for the world—very

probably were. The laws of the Church were "self-sacrifice," and "bearing one another's burdens" her children should come out from the regions where the world's laws were acknowledged.

Tom listened, was dazzled at first, and thought he was getting on the right track. But very soon he found that Grey's specific was not of the least use to him. It was no good to tell him of the rules of a society to which he felt that he neither belonged, nor wished to belong, for clearly it could not be the Church of England. He was an outsider! Grey would probably admit it to be so, if he asked him! He had no longing to be anything else, *if* the Church meant an exclusive body, which took no care of any but its own people, and had nothing to say to the great world in which he and most people had to live, and buying and selling, and hiring and working, had to go on. The close corporation might have very good laws, but they were nothing to him. What he wanted to know about was the law which this great world—the devil's world, as Grey called it—was ruled by, or rather ought to be ruled by. Perhaps, after all, Bentham and the others, whose books he had been reading, might be right! At any rate, it was clear that they had had in their thoughts the same world that he had—the world which included himself and Harry Winburn, and all laborers and squires, and farmers. So he turned to them again, not hopefully, but more inclined to listen to them than he had been before he had spoken to Grey.

Hardy was so fully occupied with college lectures and private pupils, that Tom had scruples about taking up much of his spare time in the evenings. Nevertheless, as Grey had broken down, and there was nobody else on whose judgment he could rely who would listen to him, whenever he had a chance he would propound some of his puzzles to his old friend. In some respects he got little help, for Hardy was almost as much at sea as he himself on such subjects as "value," and "wages," and the "laws of supply and demand." But there was an indomitable belief in him that all men's intercourse with one another, and not merely that of Churchmen, must be founded on the principal of "doing as they would be done by," and not on "buying cheap and selling dear," and that these never would or could be reconciled with one another, or mean the same thing, twist them how you would. This faith of his friend's comforted Tom

greatly, and he was never tired of bringing it out; but at times he had his doubts whether Grey might not be right—whether, after all, that and the like maxims and principles were meant to be the laws of the kingdoms of this world. He wanted some corroborative evidence on the subject from an impartial and competent witness, and at last hit upon what he wanted. For, one evening, on entering Hardy's rooms, he found him on the last pages of a book, which he shut up with an air of triumph on recognizing his visitor. Taking it up, he thrust it into Tom's hands, and slapping him on the shoulder, said, "There, my boy, that's what we want, or pretty near it at any rate. Now, don't say a word, but go back to your rooms, and swallow it whole and digest it, and then come back and tell me what you think of it.

"But I want to talk to you."

"I can't talk. I have spent the better part of two days over that book, and have no end of papers to look over. There; get back to your rooms, and do what I tell you, or sit down here and hold your tongue."

So Tom sat down and held his tongue, and was soon deep in Carlyle's "Past and Present." How he did revel in it—in the humor, the power, the pathos, but, above all, in the root and branch denunciations of many of the doctrines in which he had been so lately voluntarily and wearily chaining himself! The chains went snapping off one after another, and, in his exultation, he kept spouting out passage after passage in a song of triumph, "Enlightened egoism never so luminous is not the rule by which man's life can be led—*laissez-faire*, supply and demand, cash payment for the sole nexus, and so forth, were not, are not, and never will be, a practical law of union for a society of men," &c., &c., until Hardy fairly got up and turned him out, and he retired with his new-found treasure to his own rooms.

He had scarcely ever in his life been so moved by a book before. He laughed over it, and cried over it, and began half a dozen letters to the author to thank him, which he fortunately tore up. He almost forgot Mary for several hours during his first enthusiasm. He had no notion how he had been mastered and oppressed before. He felt as the crew of a small fishing-smack, who are being towed away by an enemy's cruiser, might feel on seeing a frigate with the Union Jack flying, bearing down and opening fire on

their captor; or as a small boy at school, who is being fagged against rules by the right of the strongest, feels when he sees his big brother coming around the corner. The help which he had found was just what he wanted. There was no narrowing of the ground here—no appeal to men as members of any exclusive body whatever to separate themselves and come out of the devil's world; but to men as men, to every man as a man—to the weakest and meanest, as well as to the strongest and most noble—telling them that the world is God's world, that every one of them has a work in it, and bidding them find their work and set about it.

The strong tinge of sadness which ran through the whole book, and its unsparing denunciations of the established order of things, suited his own unsettled and restless frame of mind. So he gave himself up to his new bondage, and rejoiced in it, as though he had found at last what he was seeking for; and, by the time that long vacation came round again, to which we are compelled to hurry him, he was filled full of a set of contradictory notions and beliefs, which were destined to astonish and perplex the mind of that worthy J. P. for the county of Berks, Brown the elder, whatever other effect they might have on society at large.

Readers must not suppose, however, that our hero had given up his old pursuits; on the contrary, he continued to boat, and cricket, and spar, with as much vigor as ever. His perplexities only made him a little more silent at his pastimes than he used to be. But, as we have already seen him thus employed, and know the ways of the animal in such matters, it is needless to repeat. What we want to do is to follow him into new fields of thought and action, and mark, if it may be, how he develops, and gets himself educated in one way and another; and this plunge into the great sea of social, political, and economical questions is the noticeable fact (so far as any is noticeable) of his second year's residence.

During the year he had only very meagre accounts of matters at Englebourn. Katie, indeed, had come round sufficiently to write to him; but she scarcely alluded to her cousin. He only knew that Mary had come out in London, and was much admired; and that the Porters had not taken Barton again, but were going abroad for the autumn and winter. The accounts of Harry were bad; he was still

living at Daddy Collins's, nobody knew how, and working gang-work occasionally with the outlaws of the heath.

The only fact of importance in the neighborhood had been the death of Squire Wurley, which happened suddenly in the spring. A distant cousin had succeeded him, a young man of Tom's own age.

He was also in residence at Oxford, and Tom knew him. They were not very congenial; so he was much astonished when young Wurley, on his return to College, after his relative's funeral, rather sought him out, and seemed to wish to know more of him. The end of it was an invitation to Tom to come to the Grange, and spend a week or so at the beginning of the long vacation. There was to be a party of Oxford men there, and nobody else; and they meant to enjoy themselves thoroughly, Wurley said.

Tom felt much embarrassed how to act, and, after some hesitation, told his inviter of his last visit to the mansion in question, thinking that a knowledge of the circumstances might change his mind. But he found that young Wurley knew the facts already; and, in fact, he couldn't help suspecting that his quarrel with the late owner had something to say to his present invitation. However, it did not lie in his mouth to be curious on the subject; and so he accepted the invitation gladly, much delighted at the notion of beginning his vacation so near Englebourn, and having the run of the Grange fishing, which was justly celebrated.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE RIVER SIDE.

So, from Henley, Tom went home just to see his father and mother and pick up his fishing-gear, and then started for the Grange. On his road thither, he more than once almost made up his mind to go round by Englebourn, get his first interview with Katie over, and find out how the world was really going with Harry and his sweetheart, of whom he had such meagre intelligence of late. But, for some reason or another, when it came to taking the turn to Englebourn, he passed it by, and, contenting himself for the time with a

distant view of the village and the Hawk's Lynch, drove straight to the Grange.

He had not expected to feel very comfortable at first in the house which he had left the previous autumn in so strange a manner, and he was not disappointed. The rooms reminded him unpleasantly of his passage of arms with the late master, and the grave and portly butler was somewhat embarrassed in his reception of him; while the footman, who carried off his portmanteau, did it with a grin which put him out. The set of men whom he found there were not of his sort. They were young Londoners, and he a thorough countryman. But the sight of the stream by which he took a hearty stroll before dinner, made up for everything, and filled him with pleasurable anticipations. He thought he had never seen a sweeter bit of water.

The dinner to which the party of young gentlemen sat down was most undeniable. The host talked a little too much, perhaps, under all the circumstances, of *my* wine, *my* plate, *my* mutton, &c., provoking the thought of how long they had been his. But he was bent on hospitality after his fashion, and his guests were not disposed to criticise much.

The old butler did not condescend to wait, but brought in a magnum of claret after dinner, carefully nursing it as if it were a baby, and placing it patronizingly before his young master. Before they adjourned to the billiard-room they had disposed of several of the same; but the followers were brought in by a footman, the butler being employed n discussing a bottle of an older vintage with the steward in the still-room. Then came pool, pool, pool, soda-water and brandy, and cigars, into the short hours; but Tom stole away early, having an eye to his morning's fishing, and not feeling much at home with his companions.

He was out soon after sunrise the next morning. He never wanted to be called when there was a trout-stream within reach; and his fishing instinct told him that, in these sultry dog-days, there would be little chance of sport when the sun was well up. So he let himself gently out of the hall door—paused a moment on the steps to fill his chest with the fresh morning air, as he glanced at the weather-cock over the stables—and then set to work to put his tackle together on the lawn, humming a tune to himself as he selected an insinuating red hackle and alder fly from his well-worn book, and tied them on to his cast. Then he

slung his creel over his shoulder, picked up his rod, and started for the water.

As he passed the gates of the stable-yard, the keeper came out—a sturdy bullet-headed fellow, in a velveteen coat, and cord breeches and gaiters—and touched his hat. Tom returned the salute, and wished him good morning.

"Mornin', sir; you be about early."

"Yes; I reckon it's the best time for sport at the end of June."

"'Tis so, Sir. Shall I fetch a net, and come along!"

"No, thank you, I'll manage the ladle myself. But which do you call the best water?"

"They be both middling good. They ain't much odds atwixt 'em. But I see most fish movin' o' mornins in the deep water down below."

"I don't know; the night was too hot," said Tom, who had examined the water the day before, and made up his mind where he was going. "I'm for deep water on cold days; I shall begin with the stickles up above. There's a good head of water on, I suppose?"

"Plenty down this last week, sir?"

"Come along, then; we'll walk together, if you're going that way." So Tom stepped off, brushing through the steaming long grass, gemmed with wild flowers, followed by the keeper; and, as the grasshoppers bounded chirruping out of his way, and the insect life hummed and murmured, and the lark rose and sang above his head, he felt happier than he had done for many a long month. So his heart opened towards his companion, who kept a little behind him.

"What size do you take 'em out, keeper?"

"Anything over nine inches, sir. But there's a smartish few fish of three pounds, for them as can catch 'em."

"Well, that's good; but they ain't easy caught, eh?"

"I don't rightly know, sir; but there's gents comes as stands close by the water, and flogs down stream with the sun in their backs, and uses all manner o' vlies, wi' long names; and then they gwoes away, and says, 'tain't no use flying here, 'cos there's so much cadis bait and that like."

"Ah, very likely," said Tom, with a chuckle.

"The chaps as catches the big fishes, sir," went on the keeper, getting confidential, "is thay cussed night-line poachers. There's one o' thay as has come here this last spring-tide—the artfullest chap as ever I come across, and

down to every move on the board. He don't use no shove-nets, nor such-like tackle, not he; I s'pose he don't call that sport. Besides, I got master to stake the whole water, and set old knives and razors about in the holes, but that don't answer; and this joker all'us goes alone—which, in course, he couldn't do with nets. Now, I knows within five or six yards where that chap sets his lines, and I finds 'em, now and again, set the artfullest you ever see. But 'twould take a man's life to look arter him, and I knows he gets, maybe, a dozen big fish a week, do all as I knows."

"How is it you can't catch him, keeper?" said Tom, much amused.

"Why, you see, sir, he don't come at any hours. Drat un!" said the keeper, getting hot; "blessed if I don't think he sometimes comes down among the haymakers and folk at noon, and up lines and off, while thay chaps does nothing but snigger at un—all I knows is, as I've watched till midnight, and then on again at dawn for'n, and no good come on it but once."

"How was that?"

"Well, one mornin', sir, about last Lady-day, I comes quite quiet up stream about dawn. When I get's to farmer Giles's piece (that little rough bit, sir, as you sees t'other side the stream, two fields from our outside bounds), I sees un a stooping down and hauling in's line. 'Now's your time, Billy,' says I, and up the hedge I cuts, hotfoot, to get betwixt he and our bounds. Wether he seen me or not, I can't mind; leastways, when I up's head t'other side the hedge, vorights where I seen him last, there was he a-trotting up stream quite cool, a-pocketing a two-pounder. Then he sees me, and away we goes side by side for the bounds—he this side the hedge and I t'other; he takin' the fences like our old greyhound-bitch, Clara. We takes the last fence on to that fuzzy field as you sees there, sir (parson's glebe, and out of our liberty), neck and neck, and I turns short to the left, 'cos there warn't no fence now betwixt he and I. Well, I thought he'd a dodged on about the fuz. Not he; he slouches his hat over's eyes, and stands quite cool by fust fuz bush—I minded then as we was out o' our beat. Hows'ever, my blood was up; so I at's him then and there, no words lost, and fetches a crack at's head wi' my stick. He fends wi' his'n; and then, as I rushes in to collar'n, dash'd if 'e didn't meet I full, and catch I by the thigh and collar, and send I slap over's head into a fuz bush.

Then he chuckles fit to bust hisself, and cuts his stick, while I creeps out full o' prickles, and wi' my breeches torn shameful. Dang un!" cried the keeper, while Tom roared, "he's a lissum wosbird, that I 'ool say, but I'll be up sides wi' he next time I sees un. Whorson fool as I was, not to stop and look at 'n and speak to un! Then I should ha' know'd'n again; and now he med be our parish clerk for all as I know."

"And you've never met him since?"

"Never sot eye on un, sir, arly or late—wishes I had."

"Well, keeper, here's a half crown to go towards mending the hole in your breeches, and better luck at the return match. I shall begin fishing here."

"Thank'ee, sir. You keep your cast pretty nigh that there off bank, and you med have a rare good un ther'. I seen a fish suck there just now as warn't spawned this year, nor last nether."

And away went the communicative keeper.

"Stanch fellow, the keeper," said Tom to himself, as he reeled out yard after yard of his tapered line, and with a gentle sweep dropped his collar of flies lightly on the water, each cast covering another five feet of the dimpling surface. "Good fellow, the keeper—don't mind telling a story against himself—can stand being laughed at—more than master can. Ah, there's the fish he saw sucking, I'll be bound. Now, you beauties, over his nose, and fall light—don't disgrace your bringing up!" and away went the flies quivering through the air and lighting close to the opposite bank, under a bunch of rushes, a slight round eddy flowed below the rushes as the cast came gently back across the current.

"Ah, you see them, do you, old boy?" thought Tom. "Say your prayers, then, and get shrived!" and away went the flies again, this time a little below. No movement. The third throw, a great lunge and splash, and the next moment the lithe rod bent double, and the gut collar spun along, cutting through the water like mad. Up goes the great fish twice into the air, Tom giving him the point; then up stream again, Tom giving him the butt, and beginning to reel up gently. Down goes the great fish into the swaying weeds, working with his tail like a twelve-horse screw. "I I can only get my nose to ground," thinks he. So thinks Tom, and trusts to his tackle, keeping a steady strain on trouty, and creeping gently down stream. "No go," says

the fish as he feels his nose steadily hauled round, and turns with a swirl down stream. Away goes Tom, reeling in, and away goes the fish in hopes of a slack—away, for twenty or thirty yards—the fish coming to the top lazily, now and again, and holding on to get his second wind. Now a cart track crosses the stream, no weeds, and shallow water at the side. "Here we must have it out," thinks Tom, and turns fish's nose up stream again. The big fish gets sulky, twice drifts towards the shallow, and twice plunges away at the sight of his enemy into the deep water. The third time he comes swaying in, his yellow side gleaming and his mouth open; and, the next moment Tom scoops him out onto the grass, with a "whoop" that might have been heard at the house.

"Two pounder, if he's an ounce," says Tom, as he gives him the *coup de grace*, and lays him out lovingly on the fresh green sward.

Who amongst you, dear readers, can appreciate the intense delight of grassing your first big fish after a nine month's fast? All first sensations have their special pleasure; but none can be named, in a small way, to beat this of the first fish of the season. The first clean leg-hit for four in your first match at Lord's—the grating of the bows of your racing boat against the stern of the boat ahead in your first race—the first half-mile of a burst from the cover side in November, when the hounds in the field ahead may be covered with a table-cloth, and no one but the huntsman and a top sawyer or two lies between you and them—the first brief after your call to the bar, if it comes within the year—the sensations produced by these are the same in kind; but cricket, boating, getting briefs, even hunting lose their edge as time goes on. As to lady readers, it is impossible, probably, to give them an idea of the sensation in question. Perhaps some may have experienced something of the kind at their first balls, when they heard whispers and saw all eyes turning their way, and knew that their dresses and gloves fitted perfectly. But this joy can be felt but once in a life, and the first fish comes back as fresh as ever, or ought to come, if all men had their rights, once in a season. So, good luck to the gentle craft, and its professors, and may the Fates send us much into their company! The trout fisher, like the landscape painter, haunts the loveliest places of the earth, and haunts them alone. Solitude, nature, and his own thoughts—he must be on the best

terms with all of these; and he who can take kindly the largest allowance of these is likely to be the kindliest and truest with his fellow men.

Tom had splendid sport that summer morning. As the great sun rose higher, the light morning breeze, which had curled the water, died away; the light mist drew up into light cloud, and the light cloud vanished, into cloudland, for anything I know; and still the fish rose, strange to say, though Tom felt it was an affair of minutes, and acted accordingly. At eight o'clock he was about a quarter of a mile from the house, at a point in the stream of rare charms both for the angler and the lover of gentle river beauty. The main stream was crossed by a lock, formed of a solid brick bridge with no parapets, under which the water rushed through four small arches, each of which could be closed in an instant by letting down a heavy wooden lock gate, fitted in grooves on the upper side of the bridge. Such locks are frequent in the west-country streams—even at long distances from mills and millers, for whose behoof they were made in old days, that the supply of water to the mill might be easily regulated. All pious anglers should bless the memories of the old builders of them, for they are the very paradises of the great trout, who frequent the old brickwork and timber foundations. The water in its rush through the arches, had of course worked for itself a deep hole, and then, some twenty yards below, spread itself out in wanton joyous ripples and eddies over a broad surface some fifty yards across, and dashed away towards a little island some two hundred yards below, or rolled itself slowly back towards the bridge again, up the backwater by the side of the bank, as if longing for another merry rush through one of those narrow arches. The island below was crowned with splendid alders, willows forty feet high which wept into the water, and two or three poplars; a rich mile of water meadow, with an occasional willow or alder, lay gleaming beyond; and the view was bounded by a glorious wood, which crowned the gentle slope, at the foot of which the river ran. Another considerable body of water, which had been carried off above from the main stream to flush the water meadows, joined its parent at this point; it came slowly down a broad artificial ditch running parallel with the main stream; and the narrow strip of land which divided the two streams ended abruptly just below the lock, forming a splendid point for bather or angler

Tom had fixed on this pool as his *bonne bouche*, as a child keeps its plums till the last, and stole over the bridge, stooping low to gain the point indicated. Having gained it, he glanced round to be aware of the dwarf ash-trees and willows which were scattered along the strip, and might catch needless collars and spoil sport, when, lying lazily almost on the surface where the backwater met the stream from the meadows, he beheld the great grandfather of all trout—a fellow two feet long and a foot in girth at the shoulders, just moving fin enough to keep him from turning over on to his back. He threw himself flat on the ground and crept his way to the other side of the strip; the king fish had not seen him; and the next moment Tom saw him suck in a bee, laden with his morning's load of honey, who touched the water unwarily close to his nose. With trembling hand, Tom took off his tail fly, and, on his knees substituted a governor; then shortening his line, after wetting his mimic bee in the pool behind him, tossed it gently into the monster's very jaws. For a moment the fish seemed scared, but, the next conscious in his strength, lifted his nose slowly to the surface and sucked in the bait.

Tom struck gently, and then sprang to his feet. But the Heavens had other work for the king fish, who dived swiftly under the bank; a slight jar followed, and Tom's rod was straight over his head, the line and scarcely a yard of his trusty gut collar dangling about his face. He seized his remnant with horror and unsatisfied longing, and examined it with care. Could he have overlooked any fraying which the gut might have got in the morning's work? No; he had gone over every inch of it not five minutes before, as he neared the pool. Besides it was cut clean through, not a trace of bruise or fray about it. How could it have happened? He went to the spot and looked into the water; it was slightly discolored and he could not see the bottom. He threw his fishing coat off, rolled up the sleeve of his flannel shirt, and, lying on his side, felt about the bank and tried to reach the bottom but couldn't. So, hearing the half-hour bell ring, he deferred further inquiry, and stripped in silent disgust for a plunge in the pool. Three times he hurled himself into the delicious rush of the cold chalk stream, with that utter abandon in which man, whose bones are brittle, can only indulge when there are six or seven feet of water between him and mother earth; and, letting the stream bear him away at its own sweet will to the shal-

lows below, struck up again through the rush and the roar to his plunging place. Then, slowly and luxuriously dressing, he lit his short pipe—companion of meditation—and began to ruminate on the escape of the king fish. What could have cut his collar? The more he thought the less he could make it out. When suddenly he was aware of the keeper on his way back to the house for orders and breakfast.

"What sport, sir?"

"Pretty fair," said Tom, carelessly, lugging five plump speckled fellows, weighing some seven and a half pounds out of his creel, and laying them out for the keeper's inspection.

"Well, they be in prime order, sir, surely," says the keeper, handling them; "they allus gets mortal thick acrŏss the shoulders while the May-fly be on. Loose any sir?"

"I put in some little ones up above, and lost one scream er just up the black ditch there. He must have been a four pounder, and went off, and be hanged to him, with two yards of my collar and a couple of first-rate flies. How on earth he got off I can't tell!" and he went on to unfold the particulars of the short struggle.

The keeper could hardly keep down a grin. "Ah, sir," said he, "I thinks I knows what spwiled your sport. You owes it all to that chap as I was a telling you of, or my name's not Willum Goddard;" and then, fishing the lock pole with a hook at the end of it out of the rushes, he began groping under the bank and presently hauled up a sort of infernal machine, consisting of a heavy lump of wood, a yard or so long, in which were carefully inserted the blades of four or five old knives and razors, while a crop of rusty jagged nails filled up the spare space.

Tom looked at it in wonder. "What devil's work have you got hold of there?" he said at last.

"Bless you, sir," said the keeper, "'tis only our shove net traps as I was a telling you of. I keeps hard upon a dozen on 'em, and shifts 'em about in the likeliest holes; and takes care to let the men as is about the water meadows see me a-sharpening on 'em up a bit wi' a file, now and again. And since master gev me orders to put 'em in, I don't think they tries that game on not once a month."

"Well, but where do you and your master expect to get to if you set such things as those about?" said Tom, lookin

serious. "Why, you'll be cutting some fellow's hand or foot half off one of these days. Suppose I'd waded up the bank to see what had become of my cast?"

"Lor', sir, I never thought o' that," said the keeper, looking sheepish, and lifting the back of his short hat off his head to make room for a scratch; "but," added he turning the subject, "if you wants to keep thay artful wosbirds off the water, you must frighten 'em wi' summat out o' the way. Drattle 'em, I knows they puts me to my wit's end; but you'd never 'a had five such fish as them afore breakfast, sir, if we didn't stake the waters."

"Well, and I don't want 'em if I can't get em without. I'll tell you what it is, keeper, this razor business is going a bit too far; men ain't to be mained for liking a bit of sport. You set spring-guns in the woods, and you know what that came to. Why don't you, or one of your watchers, stop out here at night, and catch the fellows, like men?

"Why, you see, sir, master don't allow me but one watcher, and he's mortal feared o' the water, he be, specially o' nights. He'd sooner by half stop up in the woods. Daddy Collins (that's an old woman as lives on the heath, sir, and a bad sort she be, too) well, she told him once, when he wouldn't gee her some baccy as he'd got, and she'd a mind to, as he'd fall twice into the water for once as he'd get out; and th' poor chap ever since can't think but what he'll be drownded. And there's queer sights and sounds by the river o' nights, too, I 'ool say, sir, let alone the white mist, as makes everything look unket, and gives a chap the rheumatics."

"Well, but *you* ain't afraid of ghosts and rheumatism?"

"No, I don't know as I be, sir. But then there's the pheasants a-breedin', and there's four brood of flappers in the withey bed, and a sight of young hares in the spinneys. I be hard put to to mind it all."

"I daresay you are," said Tom, putting on his coat and shouldering his rod; "I've a good mind to take a turn at it myself, to help you, if you'll only drop those razors."

"I wishes you would, sir," said the keeper, from behind; "if genl'men'd sometimes take a watch at nights they'd find out as keepers hadn't all fair weather work, I'll warrant, if they're to keep a good head o' game about a place. 'Taint all popping off guns, and lunching under hayricks, I can tell 'em—no, nor half on it."

"Where do you think, now, this fellow we are talking

of sells his fish?" said Tom, after a minute's thought.

"Mostly at Reading Market, I hears tell, sir. There's the guard of the mail, as goes by the cross-roads three days a week, he wur a rare poaching chap hisself down in the west afore he got his place along of his bugle-playing. They do say as he's open to any game, he is, from a buck to a snipe, and drives a trade all down the road with the country chaps.

"What day is Reading Market?"

"Tuesdays and Saturdays, sir."

"And what time does the mail go by?"

"Six o'clock in the morning, sir, at the cross-roads."

"And they're three miles off, across the fields?"

"Thereabouts, sir. I reckons it about a forty minutes' stretch, and no time lost."

"There'll be no more big fish caught on the fly to-day," said Tom, after a minute's silence, as they neared the house.

The wind had fallen dead, and not a spot of cloud in the sky.

"Not afore nightfall, I think, sir;" and the keeper disappeared towards the offices.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE NIGHT WATCH.

"You may do as you please, but I'm going to see it out."

"No, but I say do come along; that's a good fellow."

"Not I; why, we've only just come out. Didn't you hear? Wurley dared me to do a night's watching, and I said I meant to do it."

"Yes; so did I. But we can change our minds. What's the good of having a mind if you can't change it! *αἱ δευτεραι πως φρονντιδες σοφωτεραι*—isn't that good Greek and good sense?"

I don't see it. They'll only laugh and sneer if we go back now."

"They'll laugh at us twice as much if we don't. Fancy they're just beginning pool now, on that stunning table. Come along, Brown; don't miss your chance. We shall be

sure to divide the pools, as we've missed the claret. Cool hands and cool heads, you know. Green on brown, pink your player in hand! That's a good deal pleasanter than squatting here all night on the damp grass."

"Very likely."

"But you won't? Now, do be reasonable. Will you come if I stop with you another half-hour?"

"No."

"An hour then? Say till ten oclock?"

"If I went at all I would go at once."

"Then you won't come?"

"No."

"I'll bet you a sovereign you never see a poacher, and then how sold you will be in the morning! It will be much worse coming in to breakfast with empty hands and a cold in the head, than going in now. They will chaff then, I grant you."

"Well, then, they may chaff and be hanged, for I shan't go in now."

Tom's interlocutor put his hands in the pockets of his heather mixture shooting-coat, and took a turn or two of some dozen yards, backwards and forwards, above the place where our hero was sitting. He didn't like going in and facing the pool players by himself; so he stopped once more and reopened the conversation.

"What do you want to do by watching all night, Brown?"

"To show the keeper and those fellows indoors that I mean what I say. I said I'd do it, and I will."

"You don't want to catch a poacher, then?"

"I don't much care; I'll catch one if he comes in my way —or try it on, at any rate."

"I say, Brown, I like that; as if you don't poach yourself. Why, I remember when the Whiteham keeper spent the best part of a week outside the college gates, on the look-out for you and Drysdale and some other fellows."

"What has that to do with it?"

"Why, you ought to have more fellow-feeling. I suppose you go on the principle of set a thief to catch a thief?"

Tom made no answer and his companion went on:

"Come along, now, like a good fellow. If you'll come in now, we can come out again all fresh, when the rest go to bed."

"Not we. I sha'n't go in. But you can come out again if you like; you'll find me hereabouts."

The man in the heather mixture had now shot his last bolt, and took himself off to the house, leaving Tom by the riverside. How they got there may be told in a few words. After his morning's fishing, and conversation with the keeper, he had gone in full of his subject and propounded it at the breakfast table. His strictures on the knife and razor business produced a rather warm discussion, which merged in the question whether a keeper's life was a hard one, till something was said implying that Wurley's men were overworked. The master took this in high dudgeon, and words ran high. In the discussion, Tom remarked (*apropos* of night-work;) that he would never ask another man to do what he would not do himself; which sentiment was endorsed by, amongst others, the man in the heather mixture. The host had retorted, that they had better in that case try it themselves; which remark had the effect of making Tom resolve to cut short his visit, and in the meantime had brought him and his ally to the river side on the night in question.

The first hour, as we have seen, had been enough for the ally; and so Tom was left in company with a plaid, a stick and a pipe, to spend the night by himself.

It was by no means the first night he had spent in the open air, and promised to be a pleasant one for camping out. It was almost the longest day in the year, and the weather was magnificent. There was yet an hour of day light, and the place he had chosen was just the right one for enjoying the evening.

He was sitting under one of a clump of huge old alders growing on the thin strip of land already noticed, which divided the main stream from the deep artificial ditch which fed the water-meadows. On his left the emerald-green meadows stretched away till they met the inclosed corn-land. On his right ran the main stream, some fifty feet in breadth at this point; on the opposite side of which was a rough piece of ground, half withey-bed, half copse, with a rank growth of rushes at the water's edge. These were the chosen haunts of the moor-hen and water-rat, whose tracks could be seen by dozens, like small open doorways, looking out on to the river, through which ran a number of mysterious little paths into the rush-wilderness beyond.

The sun was now going down behind the copse, through

which his beams came aslant, chequered and mellow. The stream ran dimpling by him, sleepily swaying the masses of weed, under the surface and on the surface; and the trout rose under the banks, as some moth or gnat or gleaming beetle fell into the stream; here and there one more frolicsome than his brethren would throw himself joyously into the air. The swifts rushed close by him, in companies of five or six, and wheeled, and screamed, and dashed away again, skimming along the water, baffling his eye as he tried to follow their flight. Two kingfishers shot suddenly up on to their supper station, on a stunted willow stump, some twenty yards below him, and sat there in the glory of their blue backs and cloudy red waistcoats, watching with long sagacious beaks pointed to the water beneath, and every now and then dropping like flashes of light into stream, and rising again, with what seemed one motion, to their perches. A heron or two were fishing about the meadows; and he watched them stalking about in their sober quaker coats, or rising on slow heavy wing, and lumbering away home with a weird cry. He heard the strong pinions of the wood pigeon in the air, and then from the trees above his head came the soft call, "Take-two-cow-Taffy, take-two-cow-Taffy," with which that fair and false bird is said to have beguiled the hapless Welchman to the gallows. Presently, as he lay motionless, the timid and graceful little water-hens peered out from their doors in the rushes opposite, and, seeing no cause for fear, stepped daintily into the water, and were suddenly surrounded by little bundles of black soft down, which went paddling about in and out of the weeds, encouraged by the occasional sharp, clear, parental "keck—keck," and merry little dabchicks popped up in mid-stream, and looked round, and nodded at him, pert and voiceless, and dived again; even old cunning water-rats sat up on the bank with round black noses and gleaming eyes, or took solemn swims out, and turned up their tails and disappeared for his amusement. A comfortable low came at intervals from the cattle, revelling in the abundant herbage. All living things seemed to be disporting themselves, and enjoying, after their kind, the last gleams of the sunset, which were making the whole vault of heaven glow and shimmer; and, as he watched them, Tom blessed his stars as he contrasted the river-side with the glare of lamps and the click of balls in the noisy pool-room.

Before it got dark he bethought him of making sure of his position once more; matters might have changed since he chose it before dinner. With all that he could extract from the keeper, and his own experience in such matters, it had taken him several hours' hunting up and down the river that afternoon before he had hit on a night-line. But he had persevered, knowing that this was the only safe evidence to start from, and at last had found several, so cunningly set that it was clear that it was a first-rate artist in the poaching line against whom he had pittied himself. These lines must have been laid almost under his nose on that very day, as the freshness of the baits proved. The one which he had selected to watch by was under the bank, within a few yards of the clump of alders where he was now sitting. There was no satisfactory cover near the others; so he had chosen this one, where he would be perfectly concealed behind the nearest trunk from any person who might come in due time to take up the line. With this view, then, he got up, and, stepping carefully on the thickest grass, where his foot would leave no mark, went to the bank, and felt with the hook of his stick after the line. It was all right, and he returned to his old sèat.

And then the summer twilight came on, and the birds disappeared, and the hush of night settled down on river, and copse, and meadow—cool and gentle summer twilight after the hot bright day. He welcomed it too, as it folded up the landscape, and the trees lost their outline, and settled into soft black masses rising here and there out of the white mist, which seemed to have crept up to within a few yards all round him unawares. There was no sound now but the gentle murmur of the water, and an occasional rustle of reeds, or of the leaves over his head, as a stray wandering puff of air passed through them on its way home to bed. Nothing to listen to, and nothing to look at; for the moon had not risen, and the light mist hid everything except a star or two aight up above him. So, the outside world having left him for the present, he was turned inwards on himself.

This was all very well at first; and he wrapped the plaid round his shoulders and leant against his tree, and indulged in a little selfgratulation. There was something of strangeness and adventure in his solitary night-watch, which had its charm for a youngster of twenty-one; and the conciousness of not running from his word, of doing what he had said he

would do,while others shirked and broke down,was decidedly pleasant.

But this satisfaction did not last very long, and the night began to get a little wearisome, and too cool to be quite comfortable. By degrees doubts as to the wisdom of his self-imposed task crept into his head. He dismissed them for a time by turning his thoughts to other matters. The neighborhood of Englebourn, some two miles up above him, reminded him of the previous summer; and he wondered how he should get on with his cousin when they met. He should probably see her the next day, for he would lose no time in calling. Would she receive him well? Would she have much to tell him about Mary?

He had been more hopeful on this subject of late, but the loneliness, the utter solitude and silence of his position as he sat there in the misty night, away from all human habitations, was not favorable somehow to hopefulness. He found himself getting dreary and sombre in heart—more and more so as the minutes rolled on, and the silence and loneliness pressed on him more and more heavily. He was surprised at his own down-heartedness, and tried to remember how he had spent former nights so pleasantly out of doors. Ah, he had always had a companion within call, and something to do—cray fishing, bat fowling, or something of the kind! Sitting there doing nothing, he fancied, must make it so heavy to-night. By a strong effort of will he shook off the oppression. He moved, and hummed a tune to break the silence; he got up and walked up and down, lest it should again master him. If wind, storm, pouring rain, anything to make sound or movement, would but come!

But neither of them came, and there was little help in sound or movement made by himself. Besides, it occured to him that much walking up and down might defeat the object of his watch. No one would come near while he was on the move; and he was probably making marks already which might catch the eye of the setter of the night-lines at some distance, if that cunning party waited for the morning light, and might keep him away from the place altogether.

So he sat down again on his old seat, and leant hard against the alder trunk, as though to steady himself, and keep all troublesome thoughts well in front of him. In this attitude of defence he reasoned with himself on the absurdity of allowing himself to be depressed by the mere

accidents of place, and darkness, and silence; but all the reasoning at his command didn't alter the fact. He felt the enemy advancing again, and, casting about for help, fell back on the thought that he was going through a task, holding to his word, doing what he had said he would do; and this brought him some relief for the moment. He fixed his mind steadily on this task of his; but alas, here again, in his very last stronghold, the enemy began to turn his flank, and the position every minute became more and more untenable.

He had of late fallen into a pestilent habit of cross-questioning himself on anything which he was about—setting up himself like a cock at Shrovetide, and pelting himself with inexorable "whys?" and "wherefores?" A pestilent habit truly he had found it, and one which left a man no peace of his life—a relentless, sleepless habit, always ready to take advantage of him, but never so viciously alert, that he remembered, as on this night.

And so this questioning self, which would never be denied for long, began to examine him as to his proposed night's work. This precious task which he was so proud of going through with, on the score of which he had been in his heart crowing over others, because they had not taken it on them, or had let it drop, what then was the meaning of it?

"What was he out there for? What had he come out to do? They were awkward questions. He tried several answers, and was driven from one to another till he was bound to admit that he was out there that night partly out of pique, and partly out of pride: and that his object (next to earning the pleasure of thinking himself a better man than his neighbors) was, if so be, to catch a poacher. "To catch a poacher? What business had he to be catching poachers? If all poachers were to be caught, he would have to be caught himself." He had just had an unpleasant reminder of this fact from him of the heather mixture—a Parthian remark which he had thrown over his shoulder as he went off, and which had stuck. "But then," Tom argued, "it was a very different thing, his poaching—going out for a day's lark after game, which he didn't care a straw for, but only for the sport—and that of men making a trade of it, like the man the keeper spoke of." "Why? How different? If there were any difference, was it one in his favor?" Avoiding this suggestion, he took up new ground. "Poach-

ers were always the greatest blackguards in their neighborhoods, pests of society, and ought to be put down." "Possibly—at any rate he had been one of the fraternity in his time, and was scarcely the man to be casting stones at them. But his poaching had always been done thoughtlessly. How did he know that others had worse motives?"

And so he went on, tossing the matter backwards and forwards in his mind, and getting more and more uncomfortable, and unable to answer to his own satisfaction the simple question, "What right have you to be out here on this errand?"

He got up a second time and walked up and down, but with no better success than before. The change of position, and exercise, did not help him out of his difficulties. And now he got a step father. If he had no right to be there, hadn't he better go up to the house and say so, and go to bed like the rest? No, his pride couldn't stand that. But, if he couldn't go in, he might turn into a barn or outhouse; nobody would be any the wiser then, and after all he was not pledged to stop on one spot all night? It was a tempting suggestion, and was very near yielding to it at once. While he wavered, a new set of thoughts came up to back it. How, if he stayed there, and a gang of night-poachers came? He knew that many of them were desperate men. He had no arms; what could he do against them? Nothing; but he might be maimed for life in a night row which he had no business to be in—murdered, perhaps. He stood still and listened long and painfully.

Every moment, as he listened, the silence mastered him more and more, and his reason became more and more powerless. It was such a silence—a great illimitable, vague silence? The silence of a deserted house where he could at least have felt that he was bounded somewhere, by wall, and floor, and roof—where men must have lived and worked once, though they might be there no longer—would have been nothing; but this silence of the huge, wide out-of-doors world, where there was nothing but air and space around and above him, and the ground beneath, it was getting irksome, intolerable, awful! The great silence seemed to be saying to him, "You are alone, alone, alone!" and he had never known before what horror lurked in that thought.

Every moment that he stood still the spell grew stronger on him, and yet he dared not move; and a strange, wild

feeling of fear—unmistakable physical fear, which made his heart beat and his limbs tremble—seized on him. He was ready to cry out, to fall down, to run, and yet there he stood listening, still and motionless.

The critical moment in all panics must come at last. A wild and grewsome hissing and snoring, which seemed to come from the air just over his head, made him start and spring forward, and gave him the use of his limbs again at any rate, though they would not have been worth much to him had the ghost or hobgoblin appeared whom he half expected to see the next moment. Then came a screech, which seemed to flit along the rough meadow opposite, and come towards him. He drew a long breath, for he knew that sound well enough; it was nothing after all but the owls.

The mere realized consciousness of the presence of some living creatures, were they only owls, brought him to his senses. And now the moon was well up, and the wayward mist had cleared away, and he could catch glimpses of the solemn birds every now and then, beating over the rough meadow backwards and forwards, and over the shallow water, as regularly as trained pointers.

He threw himself down again under his tree, and how bethought himself of his pipe. Here was a companion which, wonderful to say, he had not thought of before since the night set in. He pulled it out, but paused before lighting. Nothing was so likely to betray his whereabouts as tobacco. True, but anything was better than such another fright as he had had, "so here goes," he thought, "if I keep off all the poachers in Berkshire;" and he accordingly lighted up, and, with the help of his pipe, once more debated with himself the question of beating a retreat.

After a sharp inward struggle, he concluded to stay and see it out. He should despise himself, more than he cared to face, if he gave in now. If he left that spot before morning, the motive would be sheer cowardice. There might be fifty other good reasons for going; but, if he went, *his* reason would be fear and nothing else. It might have been wrong and foolish to come out; it must be to go in now. "Fear never made a man do a right action," he summed up to himself; "so here I stop, come what may of it. I think I've seen the worst of it now. I was in a real blue funk, and no mistake. Let's see, wasn't I laughing this morning at the watcher who didn't like passing a night

by the river? Well, he has got the laugh on me now, if he only knew it. I've learnt one lesson to-night at any rate; I don't think I shall ever be very hard on cowards again."

By the time he had finished his pipe, he was a man again, and, moreover, notwithstanding the damp, began to feel sleepy, now that his mind was thoroughly made up, and his nerves were quiet. So he made the best of his plaid, and picked a softish place, and went off into a sort of dog-sleep, which lasted at intervals through the short summer night. A poor thin sort of sleep it was, in which he never altogether lost his consciousness, and broken by short intervals of actual wakefulness, but a blessed release from the self-questionings and panics of the early night.

He woke at last with a shiver. It was colder than he had yet felt it, and it seemed lighter. He stretched his half-torpid limbs, and sat up. Yes, it was certainly getting light, for he could just make out the figures on the face of his watch which he pulled out. The dawn was almost upon him, and his night watch was over. Nothing had come of it as yet, except his fright, at which he could now laugh comfortably enough; probably nothing more might come of it after all, but he had done the task he had set himself without flinching, and that was a satisfaction. He wound up his watch, which he had forgotten to do the night before, and then stood up, and threw his damp plaid aside, and swung his arm across his chest to restore circulation. The crescent moon was high up in the sky, faint and white, and he could scarcely now make out the stars, which were fading out as the glow in the north-east got stronger and broader.

Forgetting for a moment the purpose of his vigil, he was thinking of a long morning's fishing, and had turned to pick up his plaid and go off to the house for his fishing-rod, when he thought he heard the sound of dry wood snapping. He listened intently; and the next moment it came again, some way off, but plainly to be heard in the intense stillness of the morning. Some living thing was moving down the stream. Another moment's listening and he was convinced that the sound came from a hedge some hundred yards below.

He had noticed the hedge before: the keeper had stopped up a gap in it the day before, at the place where it came down to the water, with some old hurdles and dry thorns.

He drew himself up behind his alder, looking out from behind it cautiously towards the point from which the sound came. He could just make out the hedge through the mist, but saw nothing.

But now the crackling began again, and he was sure that a man was forcing his way over the keeper's barricade. A moment afterwards he saw a figure drop from the hedge into the slip in which he stood. He drew back his head hastily, and his heart beat like a hammer as he waited the approach of the stranger. In a few seconds the suspense was too much for him, for again there was perfect silence. He peered out a second time cautiously round the tree, and now he could make out the figure of a man stopping by the water-side just above the hedge, and drawing in a line. This was enough, and he drew back again, and made himself small behind the tree; now he was sure that the keeper's enemy, the man he had come out to take, was here. His next halt would be at the line which was set within a few yards of the place where he stood. So the struggle which he had courted was come! All his doubts of the night wrestled in his mind for a minute; but forcing them down, he strung himself up for the encounter, his whole frame trembling with excitement, and his blood tingling through his veins as though it would burst them. The next minute was as severe a trial of nerve as he had ever been put to, and the sound of a stealthy tread on the grass just below came to him as a relief. It stopped, and he heard the man stoop, then came a stir in the water, and the flapping as of a fish being landed.

Now was his time! He sprang from behind the tree, and, the next moment, was over the stooping figure of the poacher. Before he could seize him the man sprung up, and grappled with him. They had come to a tight lock at once, for the poacher had risen so close under him that he could not catch his collar and hold him off. Too close to strike, it was a desperate trial of strength and bottom.

Tom knew in a moment that he had his work cut out for him. He felt the nervous power of the frame he had got hold of as he drove his chin into the poacher's shoulder, and arched his back, and strained every muscle in his body to force him backwards, but in vain. It was all he could do to hold his own; but he felt that he might hold it yet, as they staggered on the brink of the back ditch, stamping the grass and marsh marigolds into the ground, and draw-

ing deep breath through their set teeth. A slip, a false foot-hold, a failing muscle, and it would be over; down they must go—who would be uppermost?

The poacher had trod on a soft place and Tom felt it, and, throwing himself forward, was reckoning on victory, but reckoning without his host. For, recovering himself with a twist of the body which brought them still closer together, the poacher locked his leg behind Tom's, in a crook which brought the wrestlings of his boyhood into his head with a flash, as they tottered for another moment, and then losing balance went headlong over with a heavy plunge and splash into the deep back ditch, locked in each other's arms.

The cold water closed over them, and for a moment Tom held as tight as ever. Under or above the surface it was all the same, he couldn't give in first. But a gulp of water, and the singing in his ears, and a feeling of choking, brought him to his senses, helped too, by the thought of his mother, and Mary, and love of the pleasant world up above. The folly and uselessness of being drowned in a ditch on a point of honor stood out before him as clearly as if he had been thinking of nothing else all his life ; and he let go his hold—much relieved to find that his companion of the bath seemed equally willing to be quit of him—and struggled to the surface, and seized the bank, gasping and exhausted.

His first thought was to turn round and look for his adversary. The poacher was by the bank too, a few feet from him. His cap had fallen off in the struggle, and, all chance of concealment being over, he too had turned to face the matter out, and their eyes met.

"Good God ! Harry ! is it you?"

Harry Winburn answered nothing; and the two dragged their feet out of the muddy bottom, and scrambled on to the bank, and then with a sort of common instinct sat down, dripping and foolish, each on the place he had reached, and looked at one another. Probably two more thoroughly bewildered lieges of her Majesty were not at that moment facing one another in any corner of the United Kingdom.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MARY IN MAYFAIR.

On the night which our hero spent by the side of the river, with the results detailed in the last chapter, there was a great ball in Brook-street, Mayfair. It was the height of

the season, and of course, balls, concerts, and parties of all kinds were going on in all parts of the Great Babylon, but the entertainment in question was *the* event of that evening. Persons behind the scenes would have told you at once, had you happened to meet them, and enquire on the subject during the previous ten days, that Brook-street was the place in which everybody who went anywhere ought to spend some hours between eleven and three on this particular evening. If you did not happen to be going there, you had better stay quietly at your club, or your home, and not speak of your engagements for that night.

A great awning had sprung up in the course of the day over the pavement in front of the door, and as the evening closed in, tired lawyers and merchants, on their return from the City, and the riders and drivers on their way home from the park, might have seen Holland's men laying red drugget over the pavement, and Gunter's carts coming and going, and the police "moving on" the street boys and servant maids, and other curious members of the masses, who paused to stare at the preparations.

Then came the lighting up of the rooms, and the blaze of pure white light from the uncurtained ballroom windows spread into the street, and the musicians passed in with their instruments. Then, after a short pause, the carriages of a few intimate friends, who came early at the hostess's express desire, began to drive up, and the Hansom cabs of the contemporaries of the eldest son, from which issued guardsmen and Foreign-office men, and other dancing-youthof the most approved description. Then the crowd collected again round the door—a sadder crowd now to the eye of anyone who has time to look at it; with sallow, haggard-looking men here and there on the skirts of it, and tawdry women joking and pushing to the front, through the powdered footmen, and linkmen in red waistcoats, already clamorous and redolent of gin and beer, and scarcely kept back by the half-dozen constables of the A division, told off for the special duty of attending and keeping order on so important an occasion.

Then comes a rush of carriages, and by eleven o'clock the line stretches away half round Grosvenor Square, and moves at a foot's-pace towards the lights, and the music, and the shouting street. In the middle of the line is the comfortable chariot of our friend Mr. Porter—the corners occupied by himself and his wife, while Miss Mary sits well forward

between them, her white muslin dress looped up with sprigs of heather spread delicately on either side over their knees, and herself in a pleasant tremor of impatience and excitement.

"How very slow Robert is to-day, mamma! we shall never get to the house."

"He can not get on faster, my dear. The carriage in front of us must set down, you know."

"But I wish they would be quicker. I wonder whether we shall know many people? Do you think I shall get partners?"

Not waiting for her mother's reply she went on to name some of her acquaintance who she knew would be there, and bewailing the hard fate which was keeping her out of the first dances. Mary's excitement and impatience were natural enough. The ball was not like most balls. It was a great battle in the midst of the skirmishes of the season, and she felt the greatness of the occasion.

Mr. and Mrs. Porter had for years past dropped into a quiet sort of dinner-giving life, in which they saw few but their own friends and contemporaries. They generally left London before the season was at its height, and had altogether fallen out of the ball-giving and party-going world. Mary's coming out had changed their way of life. For her sake they had spent the winter at Rome, and, now that they were at home again, they were picking up the threads of old acquaintance, and encountering the disagreeables of a return into habits long disused and almost forgotten. The giver of the ball was a stirring man in political life, rich, clever, well-connected, and much sought after. He was an old school-fellow of Mr. Porter's, and their intimacy had never been wholly laid aside, notwithstanding the severance of their paths in life. Now that Mary must be taken out, the Brook-street house was one of the first to which the Porters turned, and the invitation to this ball was one of the first consequences.

If the truth must be told, neither her father or mother were in sympathy with Mary as they gradually neared the place of setting down, and would far rather have been going to a much less imposing place, where they could have driven up at once to the door, and would not have been made uncomfortable by the shoutings of their names from servant to servant. However, after the first plunge, when they had made their bows to their kind and smiling hostess,

and had passed on into the already well-filled rooms, their shyness began to wear off, and they could in some sort enjoy the beauty of the sight from a quiet corner. They were not long troubled with Miss Mary. She had not been in the ball-room two minutes before the eldest son of the house had found her out and engaged her for the next waltz. They had met several times already, and were on the best terms; and the freshness and brightness of her look and manner, and the evident enjoyment of her partner, as they laughed and talked together in the intervals of the dance, soon attracted the attention of the young men, who began to ask one another, "Who is Norman dancing with?" and to ejaculate with various strength, according to their several temperaments, as to her face, and figure, and dress.

As they were returning towards Mrs. Porter, Norman was pulled by the sleeve more than once, and begged to be allowed to introduce first one and then another of his friends.

Mary gave herself up to the fascination of the scene. She had never been in rooms so perfectly lighted, with such a floor, such exquisite music, and so many pretty and well-bred looking people, and she gave herself up to enjoy it with all her heart and soul, and danced and laughed and talked herself into the good graces of partner after partner, till she began to attract the notice of some of the ill-natured people who are to be found in every room, and who cannot pardon the pure, and buoyant, and unsuspecting mirth which carries away all but themselves in its bright stream. So Mary passed on from one partner to another, with whom we have no concern, until at last a young lieutenant in the guards, who had just finished his second dance with her, led up a friend whom he begged to introduce. "Miss Porter—Mr. St. Cloud;" and then after the usual preliminaries, Mary left her mother's side again and stood up by the side of her new partner.

"It is your first season I believe, Miss Porter?"

"Yes, my first in London."

"I thought so; and you have only just come to town?"

"We came back from Rome six weeks ago, and have been in town ever since."

"But I am sure I have not seen you anywhere this season until to-night. You have not been out much yet?"

"Yes, indeed. Papa and mamma are very good-natured,

and go whenever we are asked to a ball, as I am fond of dancing."

"How very odd! and yet I am quite sure I should have remembered it if we had met before in town this year."

"Is it so very odd?" asked Mary, laughing: "London is a very large place. It seems very natural that two people should be able to live in it for a long time without meeting."

"Indeed, you are quite mistaken. You will find out very soon how small London is—at least how small society is; and you will get to know every face quite well—I mean the face of every one in society."

"You must have a wonderful memory!"

"Yes, I have a good memory for faces, and, by the way, I am sure I have seen you before; but not in town, and I cannot remember where. But it is not at all necessary to have a memory to know everybody in society by sight; you meet every night almost; and altogether there are only two or three hundred faces to remember. And then there is something in the look of people, and the way they come into a room or stand about, which tells you at once whether they are amongst those whom you need trouble yourself about."

"Well, I cannot understand it. I seem to be in a whirl of faces, and can hardly ever remember any of them."

"You will soon get used to it. By the end of the season you will see that I am right. And you ought to make a study of it, or you will never feel at home in London."

"I must make good use of my time then. I suppose I ought to know everybody here, for instance?"

"Almost everybody."

"And I really do not know the names of a dozen people."

"Will you let me give you a lesson?"

"Oh, yes; I shall be much obliged."

"Then let us stand here, and we will take them as they pass to the supper-room."

So they stood near the door-way of the ball-room, and he ran on, exchanging constant nods and remarks with the passers-by, as the stream flowed to and from the ices and cup, and then rattling on to his partner with the names and short sketches of the characters and peculiarities of his large acquaintance. Mary was very much amused, and had no time to notice the ill-nature of most of his remarks; and he had the wit to keep within what he considered the most innocent bounds.

"There, you know him of course," he said, as an elderly soldier-like looking man with a star passed them.

"Yes; at least, I mean I know him by sight. I saw him at the Commemoration at Oxford last year. They gave him an honorary degree on his return from India."

"At Oxford! Were you present at the Grand Commemoration, then?"

"Yes. The Commemoration Ball was the first public ball I was ever at."

"Ah! that explains it all. I must have seen you there. I told you we had met before. I was perfectly sure of it."

"What! were you there, then?"

"Yes. I had the honor of being present at your first ball, you see."

"But how curious that you should remember me!"

"Do you really think so? Surely there are some faces which, once seen, one can never forget."

"I am so glad that you know dear Oxford."

"I know it too well, perhaps, to share your enthusiasm."

"How do you mean?"

"I spent nearly three years there."

"What, were you at Oxford last year?"

"Yes. I left before Commemoration; but I went up for the gaieties, and I am glad of it, as I shall have one pleasant memory of the place now."

"Oh, I wonder you don't love it! But what college were you of?"

"Why, you talk like a graduate. I was of St. Ambrose."

"St. Ambrose! That is my college!"

"Indeed! I wish we had been in residence at the same time."

"I mean that we almost lived there at the Commemoration."

"Have you any relation there, then?"

"No, not a relation, only a distant connexion."

"May I ask his name?"

"Brown. Did you know him?"

"Yes. We were not in the same set. He was a boating man, I think?"

She felt that he was watching her narrowly now, and had great difficulty in keeping herself reasonably composed. As it was she could not help showing a little that she felt embarrassed, and looked down; and changed color slightly, busying herself with her bouquet. She longed to continue

the conversation, but somehow the manner of her partner kept her from doing so. She resolved to recur to the subject carelessly, if they met again, when she knew him better. The fact of his having been at St. Ambrose made her wish to know him better, and gave him a good start in her favor. But for the moment she felt that she must change the subject; so, looking up, she fixed on the first people who happened to be passing, and asked who they were.

"Oh, nobody, constituents probably, or something of that sort."

"I don't understand."

"Why, you see, we are in a political house to-night. So you may set down the people whom nobody knows, as troublesome ten-pounders, or that kind of thing, who would be disagreeable at the next election, if they were not asked."

"Then you do not include them in society?"

"By no manner of means."

"And I need not take the trouble to remember their faces?"

"Of course not. There is a sediment of rubbish at almost every house. At the parties here it is political rubbish. To-morrow night, at Lady Aubrey's—you will be there, I hope?"

"No, we do not know her."

"I am sorry for that. Well, there we shall have the scientific rubbish; and at other houses you see queer artists, and writing people. In fact, it is the rarest thing in the world to get a party where there is nothing of the kind, and, after all, it is rather amusing to watch the habits of the different species."

"Well, to me the rubbish, as you call it, seems much like the rest. I am sure these people were ladies and gentlemen."

"Very likely," he said, lifting his eyebrows; "but you may see at a glance that they have not the air of society. Here again, look yourself. You can see that these are constituents."

To the horror of St. Cloud, the advancing constituents made straight for his partner.

"Mary, my dear!" exclaimed the lady, "where have you been? We have lost you ever since the last dance."

"I have been standidg here, mamma," she said; and then, slipping from her late partner's arm, she made a demure

little bow, and passed into the ball-room with her father and mother.

St. Cloud bit his lip, and swore at himself under his breath as he looked after them. "What an infernal idiot I must have been not to know that her people would be sure to turn out something of that sort!" thought he. "By Jove, I'll go after them, and set myself right before the little minx has time to think it over!" He took a step or two towards the ball-room, but then thought better of it, or his courage failed him. At any rate, he turned round again, and sought the refreshment-room, where he joined a knot of young gentlemen indulging in delicate little raised pies and salads, and liberal potations of iced claret or champagne cup. Amongst them was the guardsman who had introduced him to Mary, and who received him, as he came up, with—

"Well, St. Cloud, I hope you are alive to your obligations to me."

"For shunting your late partner on to me? Yes, quite."

"You be hanged!" replied the guardsman; 'you may pretend what you please now, but you wouldn't let me alone till I had introduced you."

"Are you talking about the girl in white muslin with fern leaves in her hair?" asked another.

"Yes, what do you think of her?"

"Devilish taking, I think. I say, can't you introduce me? They say she has tin."

"I can't say I think much of her looks," said St. Cloud acting up to his principle of telling a lie sooner than let his real thoughts be seen.

"Don't you?" said the guardsman. "Well, I like her form better than anything out this year. Such a clean stepper! You should just dance with her."

And so they went on criticizing Mary and others of their partners, exactly as they would have talked of a stud of racers, till they found themselves sufficiently refreshed to encounter new labors, and broke up returning in twos and threes towards the ball-room.

St. Cloud attached himself to the guardsman, and returned to the charge.

"You seem hit by that girl," he began;—"have you known her long?"

"About a week—I met her once before to-night."

"Do you know her people? Who is her father?"

"A plain-headed old party—you wouldn't think it to look at her—but I hear he is very solvent."

"Any sons?"

"Don't know. I like your talking of my being hit, St. Cloud There she is; I shall go and try for another waltz."

The guardsman was successful, and carried off Mary from her father and mother, who were standing together watching the dancing. St. Cloud, after looking them well over, sought out the hostess, and begged to be introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Porter, gleaning, at the same time, some particulars of who they were. The introduction was effected in a minute, the lady of the house being glad to get any one to talk to the Porters, who were almost strangers amongst her other guests. She managed, before leaving them, to whisper to Mrs. Porter that he was a young man of excellent connexions.

St. Cloud made the most of his time. He exerted himself to the utmost to please, and, being fluent of speech, and thoroughly satisfied with himself, had no shyness or awkwardness to get over, and jumped at once into the good graces of Mary's parents. When she returned after the waltz, she found him, to her no small astonishment, deep in conversation with her mother, who was listening with a pleased expression to his small talk. He pretended not to see her at first, and then begged Mrs. Porter to introduce him formally to her daughter, though he had already had the honor of dancing with her.

Mary put on her shortest and coldest manner, and thought she had never heard of such impertinence. That he should be there talking so familiarly to her mother after the slip he had made to her was almost too much even for her temper But she went off for another dance, and again returned and found him still there; this time entertaining Mr. Porter with political gossip. The unfavourable impression began to wear off, and she soon resolved not to make up her mind about him without some further knowledge.

In due course he asked her to dance again, and they stood up in a quadrille. She stood by him looking straight before her, and perfectly silent, wondering how he would open the conversation. He did not leave her long in suspense.

"What charming people your father and mother are, Miss Porter!" he said; "I am so glad to have been introduced to them."

"Indeed! You are very kind. We ought to be flattered by your study of us, and I am sure I hope you will find it amusing."

St. Cloud was a little embarrassed by the rejoinder, and was not sorry at the moment to find himself called upon to perform the second figure. By the time he was at her side again he had recovered himself.

"You can't understand what a pleasure it is to meet some one with a little freshness"—he paused to think how he should end his sentence.

"Who has not the air of society," she suggested. "Yes, I quite understand."

"Indeed you quite mistake me. Surely you have not taken seriously the nonsense I was talking just now?"

"I am a constituent, you know—I don't understand how to take the talk of society."

"Oh, I see, then, that you are angry at my joke, and will not believe that I knew your father perfectly by sight. You really cannot seriously fancy that I was alluding to any one connected with you;" and then he proceeded to retail the particulars he had picked up from the lady of the house, as if they had been familiar to him for years, and to launch out again into praises of her father and mother. Mary looked straight up in his face, and, though he did not meet her eye, his manner was so composed, that she began to doubt her own senses, and then he suddenly changed the subject to Oxford and the commemoration, and by the end of the set could flatter himself that he had quite dispelled the cloud which had looked so threatening.

Mary had a great success that evening. She took part in every dance, and might have had two or three partners at once, if they would have been of any use to her. When, at last, Mr. Porter insisted that he would keep his horses no longer, St. Cloud and the guardsman accompanied her to the door, and were assiduous in the cloak room. Young men are pretty much like a drove of sheep; any one who takes a decided line in certain matters, is sure to lead all the rest.

The guardsman left the ball in the firm belief, as he himself expressed it, that Mary "had done his business for life;" and, being quite above concealment, persisted in singing her praises over his cigar at the club, to which many of the dancers adjourned; and from that night she became the fashion with the set in which St. Cloud lived.

The more enterprising of them, he amongst the foremost, were soon intimate in Mr. Porter's house, and spoke well of his dinners. Mr. Porter changed his hour of riding in the park at their suggestion, and now he and his daughter were always sure of companions. Invitations multiplied, for Mary's success was so decided, that she floated her astonished parents into a whirl of balls and breakfasts. Mr. Porter and his wife were flattered themselves, and pleased to see their daughter admired and enjoying herself; and in the next six weeks Mary had the opportunity of getting all the good and the bad which a girl of eighteen can extract from a London season.

The test was a severe one. Two months of constant excitement, of pleasure-seeking pure and simple, will not leave people just as they found them; and Mary's habits, and thoughts, and ways of looking at and judging of people and things, were much changed by the time that the gay world melted away from Mayfair and Belgravia, and it was time for all respectable people to pull down the blinds and shut the shutters of their town houses.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

WHAT CAME OF THE NIGHT WATCH.

The last knot of the dancers came out of the club, and were strolling up St. James's Street, and stopping to chaff the itinerant coffee vendor, who was preparing his stand at the corner of Piccadilly for his early customers, just about the time that Tom was beginning to rouse himself under the alder-tree, and stretch his stiffened limbs, and sniff the morning air. By the time the guardsman had let himself into his lodgings in Mount Street, our hero had undergone his unlooked for bath, and was sitting in a state of utter bewilderment as to what was next to be said or done, dripping and disconcerted, opposite to the equally dripping and, to all appearance, equally disconcerted, poacher.

At first he did not look higher than his antagonist's boots and gaiters, and spent a few seconds by the way in considering whether the arrangement of nails on the bottom of Harry's boots was better than his own. He settled that it

must be better for wading on slippery stones, and that he would adopt it, and then passed on to wonder whether Harry's boots were as full of water as his own, and whether corduroys, wet through, must not be very uncomfortable so early in the morniug, and congratulated himself in being in flannels.

And so he hung back for second after second, playing with an absurd little thought that would come into his head and give him ever so brief a respite from the effort of facing the situation, and hoping that Harry might do or say something to open the ball. This did not happen. He felt that the longer he waited the harder it would be. He must begin himself. So he raised his head gently, and took a sidelong look at Harry's face, to see whether he could not get some hint for starting, from it. But scarcely had he brought his eyes to bear, when they met Harry's, peering dolefully up from under his eyebrows, on which the water was standing unwiped, while a piece of green weed, which he did not seem to have presence of mind enough to remove, trailed over his dripping locks. There was something in the sight which tickled Tom's sense of humor. He had been prepared for sullen black looks and fierce words; instead of which he was irresistibly remined of schoolboys caught by their master using a crib, or in other like flagrant delict.

Harry lowered his eyes at once, but lifted them the next moment with a look of surprise, as he heard Tom burst in to a hearty fit of laughter. After a short struggle to keep serious, he joined in it himself.

"By Jove, though, Harry, it's no laughing matter," Tom said at last, getting on to his legs, and giving himself a shake.

Harry only replied by looking most doleful again, and picking the weed out of his hair, as he too got up.

"What in the world's to be done?"

"I'm sure I don't know, Master Tom."

"I'm very much surprised to find you at this work, Harry."

"I'm sure, so be I, to find you, Master Tom."

Tom was not prepared for this line of rejoiner. It seemed to be made with perfect innocence, and yet it put him in a corner at once. He did not care to inquire into the reason of Harry's surprise, or to what work he alluded; so he went off on another tack.

"Let us walk up and down a bit to dry ourselves. Now, Harry, you'll speak to me openly, man to man, as an old friend should—won't you?"

"Ay, Master Tom, and glad to do it."

"How long have you taken to proaching?"

"Since last Michaelmas, when they turned me out o' our cottage, and tuk away my bit o' land, and did all as they could to break me down."

"Who do you mean?"

"Why, Squire Wurley as was then—not this one, but the last—and his lawyer, and Farmer Tester."

"Then it was through spite to them that you took to it?"

"Nay, 'twarn't altogether spite, tho' I won't say but what I might ha' thought o' bein' upsides wi them."

"What was it then besides spite?"

"Want o' work. I havn't had no more 'n a matter o' six weeks' reg'lar work ever since last fall."

"How's that? Have you tried for it?"

"Well, Master Tom, I won't tell a lie about it. I don't see as I wur bound to go round wi my cap in my hand a beggin' for a day's work to the likes o' them. They knowed well enough as I wur there, ready and willing to work, and they knowed as I wur able to do as good a day's work as e'er man in the parish; and ther's been plenty o' work goin'. But they thought as I should starve, and have to come and beg for't from one or to'ther on 'em. They would ha' liked to ha' seen me clean broke down, that's wut they would, and in the house," and he paused as if his thoughts were getting a little unmanageable.

"But you might have gone to look for work elsewhere."

"I can't see as I had any call to leave the place where I wur bred up, Master Tom. That wur just wut they wanted. Why should I let 'em drive m'out?"

"Well, Harry, I'm not going to blame you. I only want to know more about what has been happening to you, that I may be able to advise and help you. Did you ever try for work, or go and tell your story, at the Rectory?"

"Try for work there! No, I never went arter work there."

Tom went on without noticing the change in Harry's tone and manner—

"Then I think you ought to have gone. I know my cousin, Miss Winter, is so anxious to help any man out of

work, and particularly you; for—" The whole story of Patty flashed into his mind, and made him stop short and stammer, and look anywhere except at Harry. How he could have forgotten it for a moment in that company was a wonder. All his questioning and patronizing powers went out of him, and he felt that their positions were changed, and that he was the culprit. It was clear that Harry knew nothing yet of his own relations with Patty. Did he even suspect them? It must all come out now at any rate, for both their sakes, however it might end. So he turned again, and met Harry's eye, which was now cold and keen, and suspicious.

"You knows all about it, then?"

"Yes; I know that you have been attached to Simon's daughter for a long time, and that he is against it. I wish I could help you, with all my heart. In fact, I did feel my way towards speaking to him about it last year, when I was in hopes of getting you the gardener's place. But I could see that I should do no good."

"I've heard say as you was acquainted with her, when she was away?"

"Yes, I was, when she was with her aunt in Oxford. What then?"

"'Twas there as she larnt her bad ways."

"Bad ways! What do you mean?"

"I means as she larnt to dress fine, and to gee herself airs to them as she'd known from a child, and as'd ha' gone through fire to please her."

"I never saw anything of the kind in her. She was a pleasant, lively girl, and dressed neatly, but never above her station. And I'm sure she has too good a heart to hurt an old friend."

"Wut made her keep shut up in the house when she cum back? ah, for days and weeks;—and arter that, wut made her so flighty and fickle? carryin' herself as proud as a lady, a mincin' and a trapesin' along, wi' all the young farmers a follerin' her, like a fine gentleman's miss."

"Come, Harry, I won't listen to that. You don't believe what you're saying, you know her better."

"You knows her well enough by all seeming."

"I know her too well to believe any harm of her."

"What call have you and the likes o' you wi' her? 'Tis no good comes o' such company keepin'."

"I tell you again, no harm has come of it to her,"

"'Tis a lie. I knowed how t'was, and 'tis thou hast done it."

"Whose hair does she carry about then in that gold thing as she hangs around her neck?"

Tom blushed scarlet, and lowered his eyes without answering.

"Dost know? 'Tis thine, by ——." The words came hissing out between his set teeth. Tom put his hands behind him, expecting to be struck, as he lifted his eyes, and said,—

"Yes, it is mine; and, I tell you again, no harm has come of it."

"'Tis a lie. I knowed how 'twas, and 'tis thou hast done it."

"Tom's blood tingled in his veins, and wild words rushed to his tongue, as he stood opposite the man who had just given him the lie, and who waited his reply with clinched hands, and laboring breast, and fierce eye. But the decipline of the last year stood him in good stead. He stood for a moment or too crushing his hands together behind his back, drew a long breath, and answered,—

"Will you believe my oath then? I stood by your side at your mother's grave. A man who did that won't lie to you, Harry. I swear to you there's no wrong between me and her. There never was fault on her side. I sought her. She never cared for me, she doesn't care for me. As for that locket, I forced it on her. I own I have wronged her, and wronged you. I have repented it bitterly. I ask your forgiveness, Harry; for the sake of old times, for the sake of your mother!" He spoke from the heart, and saw that his words went home. "Come, Harry," he went on, "you won't turn from an old playfellow, who owns the wrong he has done, and will do all he can to make up for it. You'll shake hands, and say you forgive me."

Tom paused, and held out his hand.

The poacher's face worked violently for a moment or two and he seemed to struggle once or twice to get his hand out in vain. At last he struck it suddenly into Tom's, turning his head away at the time. "'Tis what mother would ha' done," he said, "thou cassn't say more. There 'tis then, though I never thought to do't."

This curious and unexpected explanation, brought thus to a happy issue, put Tom into high spirits, and at once roused the castle-building power within him, which was always ready enough to wake up.

His first care was to persuade Harry that he had better give up poaching, and in this he had much less difficulty than he expected. Harry owned himself sick of the life he was leading already. He admitted that some of the men with whom he had been associating more or less for the last year were the greatest blackguards in the neighborhood. He asked nothing better than to get out of it. But how?

This was all Tom wanted. He would see to that; nothing could be easier.

"I shall go with you back to Englebourn this morning. I'll just leave a note for Wurley to say that I'll be back some time in the day to explain matters to him, and then we will be off at once. We shall be at the rectory by breakfast time. Ah, I forgot;—well, you can stop at David's while I go and speak to my uncle and to Miss Winter."

Harry didn't seem to see what would be the good of this; and David, he said, was not so friendly to him as he had been.

"Then you must wait at the Red Lion. Don't see the good of it! Why, of course, the good of it is that you must be set right with the Englebourn people—that's the first thing to do. I shall explain how the case stands to my uncle, and I know that I can get him to let you have your land again if you stay in the parish, even if he can't give you work himself. But what he must do it, to take you up, to show people that he is your friend, Harry. Well then, if you can get good work—mind it must be real, good, regular work—at farmer Grove's, or one of the best farmers, stop here by all means, and I will myself take the first cottage which falls vacant and let you have it, and meantime you must lodge with old David. Oh, I'll go and talk him round, never fear. But if you can't get regular work here, why you go off with flying colors; no sneaking off under a cloud and leaving no address. You'll go off with me, as my servant, if you like. But just as you please about that. At any rate, you'll go with me, and I'll take care that it shall be known that I consider you as an old friend. My father has always got plenty of work and will take you on. And then, Harry, after a bit you may be sure all will go right, and I shall be your best man, and dance at your wedding before a year's out."

There is something in this kind of thing which is contagious and irresistible. Tom thoroughly believed all that he was saying; and faith, even of such a poor kind as believ-

ing in one's own castles, has its reward. Common sense in vain suggested to Harry that all the clouds which had been gathering round him for a year were not likely to melt away in a morning. Prudence suggested that the sooner he got away the better; which suggestion, indeed, he handed on for what it was worth. But Tom treated prudence with sublime contempt. They would go together, he said, as soon as any one was up at the house, just to let him in to change his things and write a note. Harry needn't fear any unpleasant consequences. Wurley wasn't an ill-natured fellow at bottom, and wouldn't mind a few fish. Talking of fish, where was the one he heard kicking just now as Harry hauled in the line. They went to the place, and, looking in the long grass, soon found the dead trout, still on the night-line, of which the other end remained in the water. Tom seized hold of it, and pulling it carefully in, landed another fine trout, while Harry stood by, looking rather sheepish. Tom inspected the method of the lines, which was simple but awfully destructive. The line was long enough to reach across the stream. At one end was a heavy stone, at the other a short stake cut sharp, and driven into the bank well under the water. At intervals of four feet along the line short pieces of fine gimp were fastened, ending in hooks baited alternately with lob-worms and gudgeon. Tom complimented his companion on the killing nature of his cross-line.

"Where are your other lines, Harry?" he asked; "we may as well go and take them up."

"A bit higher up stream, Master Tom;" and so they walked up stream and took up the other lines.

"They'll have the finest dish of fish they've seen this long time at the house to-day," said Tom, as each line came out with two or three fine thick-shouldered fish on it; "I'll tell you what, Harry, they're deuced well set, these lines of yours, and do you credit. They do; I'm not complimenting you."

"I should rather like to be off, Master Tom, if you don't object. The mornin's gettin' on, and the men will be about. 'Twould be unked for I to be caught."

"Well, Harry, if you are so set on it off with you, but"—

"'Tis too late now; here's keeper."

Tom turned sharp round, and, sure enough, there was the keeper coming down the bank towards them, and not a couple of hundred yards off.

"So it is," said Tom; "well only hold your tongue, and do just what I tell you."

The keeper came up quickly, and touching his hat to Tom, looked inquiringly at him, and then at Harry. Tom nodded to him, as if everything were just as it should be. He was taking a two-pound fish off the last line; having finished which feat he threw in on the ground by the rest. "There keeper," he said, "there's a fine dish of fish. Now, pick 'em up and come along."

Never was keeper more puzzled. He looked from one to the other, lifting the little short hat from the back of his head, and scratching that somewhat thick skull of his, as his habit was when engaged in what he called thinking, consious that somebody ought to be tackled, and that he, the keeper, was being mystified, but quite at sea as to how he was to set himself straight.

"Wet, bain't 'ee, sir?" he said at last, nodding at Tom's clothes.

"Dampish keeper," answered Tom; "I may as well go and change, the servants will be up at the house by this time. Pick up the fish and come along. You do up the lines, Harry."

The keeper and Harry performed their tasks, looking at one another out of the corners of their eyes like the terriers of rival butchers when the carts happen to stop suddenly in the street close to one another. Tom watched them, mischievously delighted with the fun, and then led the way up to the house. When they came to the stable-yard he turned to Harry, and said, "Stop here I shan't be ten minutes;" adding, in an undertone, "Hold your tongue now;" he then vanished through the dark door, and, hurrying up to his room, changed as quickly as he could.

He was within the ten minutes, but, as he descended the back stairs in his dry things, became aware that his stay had been too long. Noise and laughter came up from the stable-yard, and shouts of, "Go it keeper," "Keeper's down," "No he bain't," greeted his astonished ears. He sprang down the last steps and rushed into the stable-yard, where he found Harry at his second wrestling match for the day while two or three stablemen, and a footman, and the gardener, looked on and cheered the combatants with the remarks he had heard on his way down.

Tom made straight to them, and tapping Harry on the shoulder, said—

"Now then, come along, I'm ready."

Whereupon the keeper and Harry disengaged, and the latter picked up his cap.

"You bain't goin', sir!" said the keeper.

"Yes, keeper."

"Not along wi' he?"

"Yes, keeper."

"What, bain't I to take un?"

"Take him! No, what for?"

"For night poachin', look at all them fish," said the keeper indignantly, pointing to the shining heap.

No, no, keeper, you've nothing to do with it. You may give him the lines though, Harry. I've left a note for your master on my dressing table," Tom said, turning to the footman, "let him have it at breakfast. I'm responsible for him," nodding at Harry. "I shall be back in a few hours, and now come along."

And, to the keeper's astonishment, Tom left the stable-yard, accompanied by Harry.

They were scarcely out of hearing before the stable-yard broke out into uproarious laughter at the keeper's expense, and much rude banter was inflicted on him for letting the poacher go. But the keeper's mind for the moment was full of other things. Disregarding their remarks, he went on scratching his head, and burst out at last with,

"Dang un; I knows I should ha' drowed un."

"Drow your grandmother," politely remarked one of the stablemen, an acquaintance of Harry Winburn, who knew his repute as a wrestler.

"I should, I tell 'ee," said the keeper as he stooped to gather up the fish, "and to think as he should ha' gone off. Master 'll be like any wild beast when he hears on't. How s'mever, 'tis Mr. Brown's doin's. 'Tis a queer start for a gen'l'man like he to be goin' off wi' a poacher chap, and callin' of un Harry. 'Tis past me altogether. But I s'pose he bain't right in 's 'ead;" and, so soliloquizing, he carried off the fish to the kitchen.

Meantime, on their walk to Englebourn, Harry, in answer to Tom's inquiries, explained that in his absence the stable-man, his acquaintance, had come up and begun to talk. The keeper had joined in and accused him point blank of being the man who had thrown him into the furze bush. The story of the keeper's discomfiture on that occasion being well known, a laugh had been raised in which Harry

had joined. This brought on a challenge to try a fall then and there, which Harry had accepted, notwithstanding his long morning's work and the ducking he had had. They laughed over the story, though Harry could not help expressing his fears as to how it might all end. They reached Englebourn in time for breakfast. Tom appeared at the rectory, and soon he and Katie were on their old terms. She was delighted to find that he had had an explanation with Harry Winburn; and that there was some chance of bringing that sturdy offender once more back into decent ways;—more delighted perhaps to hear the way in which he spoke of Patty, to whom after breakfast she paid a visit and returned in due time with the unfortunate locket.

Tom felt as if another coil of the chain he had tied about himself had fallen off. He went out into the village, consulted again with Harry, and returned again to the rectory to consider what steps were to be taken to get him work. Katie entered into the matter heartily, though forseeing the difficulties in the case. At luncheon the rector was to be sounded on the subject of the allotments. But in the middle of their plans they were startled by the news that a magistrate's warrant had arrived in the village for the arrest of Harry as a night poacher.

Tom returned to the Grange furious, and before night had had a worse quarrel with young Wurley than with his uncle before him. Had duelling been in fashion still in England they would probably have fought in a quiet corner of the park before night. As it was they only said bitter things, and parted, agreeing not to know one another in the future.

Three days afterwards, at petty sessions, where Tom brought upon himself the severe censure of the bench for his conduct on the trial, Harry Winburn was committed to Reading gaol for three months.

Readers who will take the trouble to remember the picture of our hero's mental growth during the past year, attempted to be given in a late chapter, and the state of restless dissatisfaction into which his experiences and thoughts and readings had thrown him by the time long vacation had come around again, will perhaps be prepared for the catastrophe which ensued on the conviction and sentence of Harry Winburn at petty sessions.

Hitherto, notwithstanding the strength of the new and revolutionary forces which were mustering round it, there

had always been a citadel holding out in his mind, garrisoned by all that was best in the Toryism in which he had been brought up—by loyalty, reverence for established order and established institutions; by family traditions, and the pride of an inherited good name. But now the walls of that citadel went down with a crash, the garrison being put to the sword, or making away, to hide in out of the way corner, and wait for a reaction.

It was much easier for a youngster, whose attention was once turned to such subjects as had been occupying Tom, to get hold of wild and violent beliefs and notions in those days than now. The state of Europe generally was far more dead and hopeless. There were no wars, certainly, and no expectations of wars. But there was a dull, beaten-down, pent-up feeling abroad, as if the lid were screwed down on the nations, and the thing which had been, however cruel and heavy and mean, was that which was to remain to the end. England was better off than her neighbors, but yet in bad case. In the south and west particularly, several causes had combined to spread a very bitter feeling abroad amongst the agricultural poor. First among these stood the new poor law, the provisions of which were rigorously carried out in most districts. The poor had as yet felt the harshness only of the new system. Then the land was in many places in the hands of men on their last legs, the old sporting farmers, who had begun business as young men while the great war was going on, had made their money hand over hand for a few years out of the war prices, and had tried to go on living with greyhounds and yeomanry uniforms—"horse to ride and weapon to wear"—through the hard years which had followed. These were bad masters every way, unthrifty, profligate, needy, and narrow-minded. The younger men who were supplanting them were introducing machinery, threshing machines and winnowing machines, to take the little bread which a poor man was still able to earn out of the mouths of his wife and children—so at least the poor thought and muttered to one another; and the mutterings broke out every now and then in the long nights of the winter months in blazing ricks and broken machines. Game preserving was on the increase. Australia and America had not yet become familiar words in every English village, and the labor market was everywhere overstocked; and last, but not least, the corn laws were still in force, and the

bitter and exasperating strife in which they went out was at its height. And while Swing and his myrmidons were abroad in the counties, and could scarcely be kept down by yeomanry and poor law guardians, the great towns were in almost worse case. Here too emigration had not set in to thin the labor market; wages were falling, and prices rising; the corn law struggle was better understood and far keener than in the country; and Chartism was gaining force every day, and rising into a huge threatening giant, waiting to put forth his strength, and eager for the occasion which seemed at hand.

You generation of young Englishmen, who were too young then to be troubled with such matters, and have grown into manhood since, you little know—may you never know!—what it is to be living the citizens of a divided and distracted nation. For the time that danger is past. In a happy home and so far as man can judge, in time, and only just in time, came the repeal of the corn laws, and the great cause of strife and the sense of injustice passed away out of men's minds. The nation was roused by the Irish famine, and the fearful distress in other parts of the country, to begin looking steadily and seriously at some of the sores which were festering in its body, and undermining health and life. And so the tide had turned, and England had already passed the critical point, when 1848 came upon Christendom, and the whole of Europe leapt up into a wild blaze of revolution.

Is any one still inclined to make light of the danger that threatened England in that year, to sneer at the 10th of April, and the monster petition, and the monster meetings on Kennington and other commons? Well, if there be such persons amongst my readers, I can only say that they can have known nothing of what was going on around them and below them, at that time, and I earnestly hope that their vision has become clearer since then, and that they are not looking with the same eyes that see nothing, at the signs of to-day. For that there are questions still to be solved by us in England, in this current half-century, quite as likely to tear the nation to pieces as the corn laws, no man with half an eye in his head can doubt. They may seem little clouds like a man's hand on the horizon just now, but they will darken the whole heaven before long, unless we can

find wisdom enough amongst us to take the little clouds in hand in time, and make them descend in soft rain.

But such matters need not be spoken of here. All I want to do is to put my young readers in a position to understand how it was that our hero fell away into beliefs and notions, at which Mrs. Grundy and all descent people could only lift up eyes and hands in pious and respectable horror, and became, soon after the incarceration of his friend for night poaching, little better than a physicial force Chartist at the age of twenty-one.

CHAPTER XL.

HUE AND CRY.

At the end of a gusty wild October afternoon a man, leading two horses was marching up and down the little plot of short turf at the top of the Hawk's Lynch. Every now and then he would stop on the brow of the hill to look over the village, and seemed to be waiting for somebody from that quarter. After being well blown he would turn to his promenade again, or go in under the clump of firs, through which the rising south west wind, rushing up from the vale below, was beginning to make a moan; and, hitching the horses to some stump or bush, and patting and coaxing them to induce them, if so might be, to stand quiet for a while, would try to settle himself to leeward of one of the larger trees.

But the fates were against all attempts at repose. He had scarcely time to produce a cheroot from his case and light it under many difficulties, when the horses would begin fidgeting, and pulling at their bridles, and shifting round to get their tails to the wind. They clearly did not understand the necessity of the position, and were inclined to be moving stablewards. So he had to get up again, sling the bridles over his arm, and take to his march up and down the plot of turf; now stopping for a moment or two to try to get his cheroot to burn straight, and pishing and pshawing over its perverseness; now going again and again to the brow, and looking along the road which led to the village, hold-

ing his hat on tight with one hand—for by this time it was blowing half a gale of wind.

Though it was not yet quite the hour for his setting, the sun had disappeared behind a heavy bank of wicked slate-colored cloud, which looked as though it were rising straight up into the western heavens, while the wind whirled along and twisted into quaint shapes a ragged rift of white vapor, which went hurrying by, almost touching the tops of the moaning firs. Altogether an uncanny evening to be keeping tryst at the top of a wild knoll; and so thought our friend with the horses, and showed it, too, clearly enough, had any one been there to put a construction on his impatient movements.

There was no one nearer than the village, of which the nearest house was half-a-mile and more away; so, by way of passing the time, we must exercise our privilege of putting into words what he is half thinking, half muttering to himself:—

"A pleasant night I call this, to be out on a wild goose chase. If ever I saw a screaming storm brewing, there it comes. I'll be hanged if I stop up here to be canght in it for all the crack-brained friends I ever had in the world; and I seem to have a faculty for picking up none but crack-brained ones. I wonder what the plague can keep him so long; he must have been gone an hour. There steady, steady, old horse. Confound this weed! What rascals these tobacconists are. You never can get a cheroot now worth smoking. Every one of them goes sputtering up the side, or charring up the middle, and tasting like tow soaked in saltpetre and tobacco juice. Well, I suppose I shall get the real thing in India.

"India! In a month from to-day we shall be off. To hear our senior major talk, one might as well be going to the bottomless pit at once. Well, he'll sell out, that's a comfort. Gives us a step, and gets rid of an old ruffian. I don't seem to care much what the place is like if we only get some work; and there will be some work there before long, by all accounts. No more garrison-town life, at any rate. And if I have any luck—a man may get a chance there.

"What the deuce can he be about? This all comes of sentiment, now. Why couldn't I go quietly off to India without bothering up to Oxford to see him? Not but what it's a pleasant place enough. I've enjoyed my three days there uncommonly. Food and drink all that can be

wished, and plenty of good fellows and fun. The look of the place, too, makes one feel respectable. But, by George, if their divinity is at all like their politics, they must turn out a queer set of parsons—at least if Brown picked up his precious notions at Oxford. He always was a headstrong beggar. What was it he was holding forth about last night? Let's see. 'The sacred right of insurrection.' Yes, that was it, and he talked as if he believed it all too; and, if there should be a row, which don't seem unlikely, by Jove I think he'd act on it in the sort of temper he's in. How about the sacred right of getting hung or transported? I shouldn't wonder to hear of that some day. Gad! suppose he should be in for an instalment of his sacred right to-night. He's capable of it, and of lugging me in with him. What did he say we were come here for? To get some fellow out of a scrape, he said—some sort of poaching radical foster-brother of his, who had been in gaol, and deserved it too, I'll be bound. And we couldn't go down quietly into the village and put up at the public, where I might have set in the tap, and not run the chance of having my skin blown over my ears, and my teeth down my throat, on this cursed look-out place, because he's *too well known* there. What does that mean? Upon my soul it looks bad. They may be lynching a J. P. down there, or making a spread eagle of the parish-constable at this minute, for anything I know, and as sure as fate if they are I shall get my foot in it.

"It will read sweetly in the naval and military intelligence—'A court-martial was held this day at Chatham, president, Colonel Smith, of Her Majesty's 101st Regiment, to try Henry East, a lieutenant in the same distinguished corps, who has been under arrest since the 10th ult, for aiding and abetting the escape of a convict, and taking part in a riot in the village of Englebourn, in the county of Berks. The defence of the accused was that he had a sentimental friendship for a certain Thomas Brown, an undergrade of St. Ambrose College, Oxford, &c. &c.; and the sentence of the Court—'

"Hang it! It's no laughing matter. Many a fellow has been broken for not making half such a fool of himself as I have done, coming out here on this errand. I'll tell T. B. a bit of my mind as sure as——

"Hullo! didn't I hear a shout? Only the wind, I believe. How it does blow! One of these firs will be down, I ex-

pect, just now. The storm will burst in a quarter of an hour. Here goes! I shall ride down into the village, let what will come of it. Steady now, steady. Stand still you old fool; can't you?——

"There, now I'm all right. Solomon said something about a beggar on horseback. Was is Solomon, though? Never mind. He couldn't ride. Never had a horse till he was grown up. But he said some uncommon wise things about having to do with such friends as T. B. so, Harry East, if you please, no more tomfoolery after to-day. You've got a whole skin, and a lieutenant's commission to make your way in the world with, and are troubled with no particular crotchets yourself that need ever get you into trouble. So just you keep clear of other people's. And if your friends must be mending the world, and poor men's plastering, and running their heads against stone walls, why, just you let go of their coat tails."

So muttering and meditating, Harry East paused a moment after mounting, to turn up the collar of the rough shooting coat which he was wearing, and button it up to the chin, before riding down the hill, when, in the hurly-burly of the wind, a shout came spinning past his ears, plain enough this time; he heard the gate at the end of Englebourn-lane down below him shut with a clang, and saw two men running at full speed towards him, straight up the hill.

"Oh! here you are at last," he said, as he watched them. "Well, you don't lose your time now. Somebody must be after them. What's he shouting and waving his hand for? Oh, I'm to bring the cavaly supports down the slope, I suppose. Well, here goes; he has brought off his pal the convict I see—

> Says he, you've 'scaped from transportation
> All upon the briny main ;
> So never give way to no temptation,
> And don't get drunk nor prig again !

There goes the gate again. By Jove, what's that? Dragoons, as I'm a sinner! There's going to be the d——st bear-fight,"

Saying which, Harry East dug his heels into his horse's sides, holding him up sharply with the curb at the same time, and in another, moment was at the bottom of the solitary mound on which he had been perched for the last hour, and on the brow of the line of hill out of which it rose so abruptly, just at the point for which the two runners

were making. He had only time to glance at the pursuers, and saw that one or two rode straight on the track of the fugitives, while the rest skirted away along a parish road which led up the hill side by an easier ascent, when Tom and his companion were by his side. Tom seized the bridle of the led horse, and was in the saddle with one spring.

"Jump up behind," he shouted; "now then, come along."

"Who are they?" roared East—in that wind nothing but a shout could be heard—pointing over his shoulder with his thumb as they turned to the heath.

"Yeomanry."

"After you?"

Tom nodded, as they broke into a gallop, making straight across the heath towards the Oxford road. They were some quarter of a mile in advance before any of their pursuers showed over the brow of the hill behind them. It was already getting dusk, and the great bank of cloud was by this time all but upon them, making the atmosphere denser and darker every second. Then, first one of the men appeared who had ridden straight up the hill under the Hawk's Lynch, and, pulling up for a moment, caught sight of them and gave chase. Half a minute later, and several of those who had kept to the road were also in sight, some distance away on the left, but still near enough to be unpleasant; and they too, after a moment's pause, were in full pursuit. At first the fugitives held their own, and the distance between them and their pursuers was not lessened, but it was clear that this could not last. Anything that horse-flesh is capable of, a real good Oxford hack, such as they rode, will do; but to carry two full-grown men at the end of a pretty long day, away from fresh horses and moderate weights, is too much to expect even of Oxford horse-flesh; and the gallant beast which Tom rode was beginning to show signs of distress when they struck into the road. There was a slight dip in the ground at this place, and a little further on the heath rose suddenly again, and the road ran between high banks for a short distance.

As they reached this point they dissapeared for the moment from the yeomanry, and the force of the wind was broken by the banks, so that they could breathe more easily, and hear one another's voices.

Tom looked anxiously round at the lieutenant, who

shrugged his shoulders in answer to the look, as he bent forward to ease his own horse, and said—

"Can't last another mile."

"What's to be done?"

East again shrugged his shoulders, but said nothing

"I know, Master Tom," said Harry Winburn.

"What?"

"Pull up a bit, sir."

Tom pulled up, and his horse fell into a walk willingly enough, while East passed on a few strides ahead. Harry Winburn sprang off.

"You ride on, now, Master Tom," he said, "I knows the heath well; you let me bide."

"No, no, Harry, not I. I won't leave you now; so let them come, and be hanged."

East had pulled up, and listened to their talk.

"Look here, now," he said to Harry; "put your arm over the hind part of his saddle, and run by the side; you'll find you can go as fast as the horse. Now, you two push on, and strike across the heath. I'll keep the road, and take off this joker behind, who is the only dangerous customer."

"That's like you, old boy," said Tom, "then we'll meet at the first public beyond the heath." They passed ahead in their turn, and turned on to the heath, Harry running by the side, as the lieutenant had advised.

East looked after them, and then put his horse into a steady trot, muttering—

"Like me! yes, devilish like me; I know that well enough. Didn't I always play cat's-paw to his monkey at school? but that convict don't seem such a bad lot after all."

Meantime Tom and Harry struck away over the heath, as the darkness closed in, and the storm drove down. They stumbled on over the charred furze roots, and splashed through the sloppy peat cuttings, casting anxious, hasty looks over their shoulders as they fled, straining every nerve to get on, and longing for night and the storm.

"Hark, wasn't that a pistol-shot?" said Tom, as they floundered on. The sound came from the road they had left.

"Look! here's some on 'em, then," said Harry; and Tom was aware of two horsemen coming over the brow of the hill on their left, some three hundred yards to the rear. At the same instant his horse stumbled, and came down on his nose and knees. Tom went off over his shoulder, tumbling

against Harry, and sending him headlong to the ground, but keeping hold of the bridle; they were up again in a moment.

"Are you hurt?"

"No."

"Come along, then," and Tom was in the saddle again, when the pursuers raised a shout. They had caught sight of them now, and spurred down the slop towards them. Tom was turning his horse's head straight away, but Harry shouted,—

"Keep to the left, Master Tom, to the left, right on."

It seemed like running into the lion's jaws, but he yielded, and they pushed on down the slope on which they were. Another shout of triumph rose on the howling wind; Tom's heart sank within him. The enemy was close on them at every stride; another hundred yards, and they must meet at the bottom of the slope. What could Harry be dreaming of? The thought had scarcely time to cross his brain, when down went the two yeoman, horse and man, floundering in a bog above their horses' girths. At the same moment the storm burst on them, the driving mist and pelting rain. The chase was over. They could not have seen a regiment of men at fifty yards' distance.

"You let me lead the horse, Master Tom," shouted Harry Winburn; "I knowed where they was going; 'twill take they the best part o' the night to get out 'o that, I knows."

"All right, let's get back to the road, then, as soon as we can," said Tom, surrendering his horse's head to Harry, and turning up his collar, to meet the pitiless deluge which was driving on their flanks. They were drenched to the skin in two minutes; Tom jumped off, and plodded along on the opposite side of his horse to Harry. They did not speak; there was very little to be said under the circumstances, and a great deal to be thought about.

Harry Winburn probably knew the heath as well as any man living, but even he had much difficulty in finding his way back to the road through that storm. However, after some half-hour, spent in beating about, they reached it, and turned their faces northwards towards Oxford. By this time night had come on; but the fury of the storm had passed over them, and the moon began to show every now and then through the driving clouds. At last Tom roused himself out of the brown study in which he had been

hitherto plodding along, and turned down his coat collar, and shook himself, and looked up at the sky, and across at his companion, who was still leading the horse along mechanically. It was too dark to see his face, but his walk and general look were listless and dogged; at last Tom broke silence.

"You promised not to do anything, after you came out, without speaking to me." Harry made no reply; so presently he went on:—

"I didn't think you'd have gone in for such a business as that to-night. I shouldn't have minded so much if it had only been machine-breaking; but robbing the cellar and staving in the ale casks and maiming cattle—"

"I'd no hand in that," interrupted Harry.

"I'm glad to hear it. You were certainly leaning against the gate when I came up, and taking no part in it; but you were one of the leaders of the riot."

"He brought it on hisself," said Harry, doggedly.

"Tester is a bad man, I know that; and the people have much to complain of: but nothing can justify what was done to-night." Harry made no answer.

"You're known, and they'll be after you the first thing in the morning. I don't know what's to be done."

"'Tis very little odds what happens to me."

"You've no right to say that, Harry. Your friends—"

"I ain't got no friends."

"Well, Harry, I don't think you ought to say that after what has happened to-night. I don't mean to say that my friendship has done you much good yet; but I've done what I could, and——"

"So you hev', Master Tom, so you hev'."

"And I'll stick by you through thick and thin, Harry. But you must take heart and stick by yourself, or we shall never pull you through." Harry groaned, and then, turning at once to what was always uppermost in his mind; said,—

"'Tis no good now I've been in gaol. Her father wur allus agin me. And now, how be I ever to hold up my head at whom? I seen her once arter I came out."

"Well, and what happenad?" said Tom, after waiting a moment or two.

"She just turned red and pale, and was all flustered like, and made as though she'd have held out her hand: and then

tuk and hurried off like a frightened hare, as though she heerd somebody comin'. Ah! 'tis no good! 'tis no good!"

"I don't see anything very hopeless in that," said Tom.

"I've knowed her since she wur that high," went on Harry, holding out his hand about as high as the bottom of his waistcoat, without noticing the interruption, "when her and I went gleanin' together. 'Tis what I've thought on, and lived for. 'Tis four year and better since she and I broke a sixpence auver't. And at times it sim'd as tho' 'twould all cum right, when my poor mother wur livin',—tho' her never tuk to it kindly, mother didn't. But 'tis all gone now! and I be that mad wi' myself, and mammered, and down, I be ready to hang myself, Master Tom; and if they just teks and transports me——"

"Oh, nonsense, Harry! You must keep out of that. We shall think of some way to get you out of that before morning. And you must get clear away, and go to work on the railways or somewhere. There's nothing to be downhearted about as far as Patty is concerned."

"Ah! 'tis they as wears it as knows where the shoe pinches. You'd say different if 'twas you, Master Tom."

"Should I?" said Tom; and, after pausing a moment or two, he went on. "What I'm going to say is in confidence. I've never told it to any man yet, and only one has found it out. Now, Harry, I'm much worse off than you are at this minute. Don't I know where the shoe pinches! Why I haven't seen—I've scarcely heard of—of —well, of my sweetheart—there, you'll understand that—for this year and more. I don't know when I may see her again. I don't know that she hasn't clean forgotten me. I don't know that she ever cared a straw for me. Now, you know quite well that you are better off than that."

"I bean't so sure o' that, Master Tom. But I be terrible vexed to hear about you."

"Never mind about me. You say you're not sure, Harry. Come, now, you said, not two minutes ago, that you two had broken a sixpence over it. What does that mean, now?"

"Ah! but 'tis four years gone. Her's been a leadin' o' me up and down, and a dancin' o' me round and round purty nigh ever since, let alone the time as she wur at Oxford, when——"

"Well, we won't talk of that, Harry. Come, will yes.

terday do for you? If you thought she was all right yesterday, would that satisfy you?"

"Ees; and summat to spare."

"You don't believe it, I see. Well, why do you think I came after you to-night? How did I know what was going on?"

"That's just what I've been a axin' o' myself as we cum along."

"Well, then, I'll tell you. I came because I got a note from her yesterday at Oxford." Tom paused, for he heard a muttered growl from the other side of the horse's head, and could see, even in the fitful moonlight, the angry toss of the head with which his news was received, "I didn't expect this, Harry," he went on presently, "after what I told you just now about myself. It was a hard matter to tell it at all; but, after telling you, I didn't think you'd suspect me any more. However, perhaps I've deserved it. So, to go on with what I was saying, two years ago, when I came to my senses about her, and before I cared for any one else, I told her to write if ever I could do her a service. Anything that a man could do for his sister I was bound to do for her, and I told her so. She never answered till yesterday, when I got this note," and he dived into the inner breast pocket of his shooting-coat. "If it isn't soaked to pulp, it's in my pocket now. Yes, here it is," and he produced a dirty piece of paper, and handed it across to his companion. "When there's light enough to read it, you'll see plain enough what she means, though your name is not mentioned."

Having finished his statement, Tom retired into himself, and walked along watching the hurrying clouds. After they had gone some hundred yards, Harry cleared his throat once or twice, and at last broke out,—

"Master Tom."

"Well."

"You bean't offended wi' me, sir, I hopes?"

"No, why should I be offended?"

"'Cause I knows I be so all-fired jealous, I can't abear to hear o' her talkin', let alone writin' to——"

"Out with it. To me, you were going to say."

"Nay, 'tis mwore nor that."

"All right, Harry, if you only lump me with the rest of mankind, I don't care. But you needn't be jealous of me, and you musn't be jealous of me, or I shan't be able to help

you as I want to do. I'll give you my hand and word on it, as man to man, there's no thought in my heart towards her that you mightn't see this minute. Do you believe me?"

"Ees, and you'll forgie——"

"There's nothing to forgive, Harry. But now you'll allow your case isn't such a bad one. She must keep a good lookout after you to know what you were likely to be about to-day. And if she didn't care for you she wouldn't have written to me. That's good sense I think."

Harry assented, and then Tom went into a consideration of what was to be done, and, as usual, fair castles began to rise in the air. Harry was to start down the line at once, and take work on the railway. In a few weeks he would be captain of a gang, and then what was to hinder his becoming a contractor, and making his fortune, and buying a farm of his own at Englebourn? To all which Harry listened with open ears till they got off the heath, and came upon a small hamlet of some half dozen cottages scattered along the road.

"There's a public here, I suppose," said Tom, returning to the damp realities of life. Harry indicated the humble place of entertainment for man and horse.

"That's all right. I hope we shall find my friend here;" and they went towards the light which was shining temptingly through the latticed window of the road-side inn.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE LIEUTENANT'S SENTIMENTS AND PROBLEMS.

"STOP! It looks so bright that there must be something going on. Surely the yeomanry can never have come on here already?"

Tom laid his hand on the bridle, and they halted on the road opposite the public-house, which lay a little back, with an open space of ground before it. The sign-post, and a long water-trough for the horses of guests to drink at, were pushed forward to the side of road to intimate the whereabouts of the house, and the hack which Harry led was already drinking eagerly.

"Stay here for a minute, and I'll go to the window, and

see what's up inside. It's very unlucky, but it will never do for us to go in if there are any people there."

Tom stole softly up to the window out of which the light came. A little scrap of a curtain was drawn across a portion of it, but he could see easily into the room on either side of the curtain. The first glance comforted him, for he saw at once that there was only one person in the kitchen ; but who and what he might be was a puzzle. The only thing which was clear at a first glance was, that he was making himself at home.

The room was a moderate-sized kitchen, with a sanded floor, and a large fire-place ; a high wooden screen, with a narrow seat in front of it, ran along the side on which the door from the entrance passage opened. In the middle there was a long, rough, walnut table on which stood a large loaf, some cold bacon and cheese, and a yellow jug, a few rush-bottomed chairs and a settle composed the rest of the furniture. On the wall were a few samplers, a warming pan, and shelves with some common delf plates, and cups and saucers. But though the furniture was meagre enough, the kitchen had a look of wondrous comfort for a drenched mortal outside. Tom felt this keenly, and, after a glance round, fixed his attention on the happy occupant, with the view of ascertaining whether he would be a safe person to intrude on the circumstances. He was seated on a low, three-cornered oak seat, with his back to the window, steadying a furze faggot on the fire with the poker. The faggot blazed and crackled, and roared up the chimney, sending out the bright flickering light which had attracted them, and forming a glorious top to the glowing clear fire of wood embers beneath, into which was inserted a long, funnel-shaped tin, out of which the figure helped himself to some warm compound, when he had settled the faggot to his satisfaction. He was enveloped as to his shoulders in a heavy, dirty-white coat, with huge cape and high collar, which hid the back of his head, such as was then in use by country carriers; but the garment was much too short for him, and his bare arms came out a foot beyond the end of the sleeves. The rest of his costume was even more eccentric, being nothing more or less than a coarse flannel petticoat ; and his bare feet rested on the mat in front of the fire.

Tom felt a sudden doubt as to his sanity, which doubt was apparently shared by the widow woman, who kept the

house, and her maid-of-all-work, one or other of whom might be seen constantly keeping an eye on their guest from behind the end of the wooden screen. However, it was no time to be over particular; they must rest before going further, and, after all, it was only one man. So Tom thought, and was just on the point of calling Harry to come on, when the figure turned round towards the window, and the face of the lieutenant disclosed itself between the high-peaked gills of the carrier's coat. Tom burst out into a loud laugh, and called out,

"It's all right, come along."

"I'll just look to the hosses, Master Tom."

"Very well, and then come into the kitchen; saying which, he hurried into the house, and after tumbling against the maid-of-all-work in the passage, emerged from behind the screen.

"Well, here we are at last, old fellow," he said, slapping East on the shoulder.

"Oh, it's you, is it? I thought you were in the lock-up by this time."

East's costume, as he sat looking up, with a hand on each knee, was even more ridiculous on a close inspection, and Tom roared with laughter again.

"I don't see the joke," said East without moving a muscle.

"You would, though, if you could see yourself. You wonderful old Guy, where did you pick up that toggery?"

"The late lamented husband of the widow Higgs, our landlady, was the owner of the coat. He also bequeathed to her several pairs of breeches, which I have vainly endeavored to get into. The late lamented Higgs was an abominably small man. He must have been very much her worse half. So, in default of other clothing, the widow has kindly obliged me by the loan of one of her own garments."

"Where are your own clothes?"

"There," said East, pointing to a clothes' horse, which Tom had not hitherto remarked, which stood well into the chimney corner; "and they are dry, too," he went on, feeling them; "at least the flannel shirt and trousers are, so I'll get into them again."

"I say, ma'am," he called out, addressing the screen, "I'm going to change my things. So you had better not look in just now. In fact, we can call now, if we want anything."

At this strong hint the widow Higgs was heard bustling away behind the screen, and after her departure East got into some of his own clothes again, offering the cast-off garments of the Higgs family to Tom, who, however, declined, contenting himself with taking off his coat and waistcoat, and hanging them upon the horse. He had been blown comparatively dry in the last half-hour of his walk.

While East was making his toilet, Tom turned to the table, and made an assault on the bread and bacon, and then poured himself out a glass of beer and began to drink it, but was pulled up half way, and put it down with a face all drawn up into puckers by its sharpness.

"I thought you wouldn't appreciate the widow's tap," said East, watching him with a grin. "Regular whistle-belly vengence, and no mistake! Here, I don't mind giving you some of my compound, though you don't deserve it."

So Tom drew his chair to the fire, and smacked his lips over the long-necked glass, which East handed to him.

"Ah! that's not bad tipple after such a ducking as we've had. Dog's-nose, isn't it?"

East nodded.

"Well, old fellow, I will say you are the best hand I know at making the most of your opportunities. I don't know of any one else who could have made such a good brew out of that stuff and a drop of gin."

East was not to be mollified by any such compliment.

"Have you got many more such jobs as to-day's on hand? I should think they must interfere with reading."

"No. But I call to-day's a real good job."

"Do you? I don't agree. Of course it's a matter of taste. I have the honor of holding Her Majesty's commission; so I may be prejudiced, perhaps."

"What difference does it make whose commission you hold? You wouldn't hold any commission, I know, which would bind you to be a tyrant and oppress the weak and the poor."

"Humbug about your oppressing? Who is the tyrant, I should like to know, the farmer, or the mob that destroys his property? I don't call Swing's mob the weak and the poor."

"That's all very well; but I should like to know how you'd feel if you had no work and a starving family. You don't know what people have to suffer. The only wonder

is that all the country isn't in a blaze; and it will be if things last as they are much longer. It must be a bad time which makes such men as Harry Winburn into rioters."

"I don't know anything about Harry Winburn. But I know there's a good deal to be said on the yeomanry side of the question."

"Well, now, East, just consider this——"

"No, I'm not in the humor for considering. I don't want to argue with you."

"Yes, that's always the way. You won't hear what a fellow's got to say, and then set him down for a mischievous fool, because he won't give up beliefs founded on the evidence of his own eyes, and ears, and reason."

"I don't quarrel with any of your beliefs. You've got 'em—I haven't—that's just the difference between us. You got some sort of faith to fall back upon, in equality, and brotherhood, and a lot of cursed nonsense of that kind. So, I dare say, you could drop down into a navigator, or a shoe-black, or something in that way to-morrow, and think it pleasant. You might rather enjoy a trip across the water at the expense of your country, like your friend the convict here."

"Don't talk such rot, man. In the first place, he isn't a convict—you know that, well enough."

"He is just out of prison, at any rate. However, this sort of thing isn't my line of country at all. So the next time you want to do a bit of gaol-delivery on your own hook, don't ask me to help you.

"Well, if I had known all that was going to happen, I wouldn't have asked you to come, old fellow. Come, give us another glass of your dog's-nose, and no more of your sermon, which isn't edifying."

The lieutenant filled the long-necked glass which Tom held out, with the creaming mixture, which he was nursing in the funnel-shaped tin. But he was not prepared to waive his right to lecture, and so continued, while Tom sipped his liquor with much relish, and looked comically across at his old schoolfellow.

"Some fellows have a call to set the world right—I haven't. My gracious sovereign pays me seven and sixpence a day; for which sum I undertake to be shot at on certain occasions and by proper persons, and I hope when the time comes I shall take it as well as another. But that doesn't include turning out to be potted at like a woodcock

on your confounded Berkshire wilds by a turnip-headed yeoman. It isn't to be done at the figure."

"What in the world do you mean?"

"I mean just what I say."

"That one of those unspeakable yeomanry has been shooting at you?"

"Just so."

"No, you don't really mean it? Wh-e-e-w! Then that shot we heard was fired at you. 'Pon my honor I'm very sorry."

"Much good your sorrow would have done me if your precious countryman had held straight."

"Well, what can I say more, East? If there's anything I can do to show you that I really am very sorry and ashamed at having brought you into such a scrape, only tell me what it is."

"I don't suppose your word would go for much at the Horse Guards, or I'd ask you to give me a character for coolness under fire."

"Come, I see you're joking now, old fellow. Do tell us how it happened."

"Well, when you turned off across the common I pulled up for half a minute, and then held on at a steady slow trot. If I had pushed on ahead, my friend behind would have been just as likely to turn after you as after me. Presently I heard number One coming tearing along behind; and as soon as he got from between the banks, he saw me, and came straight after me down the road. You were well away to the left, so now I just clapped on a bit, to lead him further away from the right scent, and on he came, whooping and hallooing to me to pull up. I didn't see why I hadn't just as good a right to ride along the road at my own pace as he; so the more he shouted, the more I didn't stop. But the beggar had the legs of me. He was mounted on something deuced like a thoroughbred, and gained on me hand over hand. At last when I judged he must be about twenty yards behind, I thought I might as well have a look at him—so I just turned for a moment, and, by Jove, there was my lord, lugging a pistol out of his right holster. He shouted again to me to stop. I turned, ducked my head, and the next moment he pulled trigger, and missed me."

"And what happened then," said Tom, eagerly drawing a long breath.

"Why, I flatter myself I showed considerable generalship. If I had given him time to get at his other pistol, or his toasting fork, it was all up. I dived into my pocket, where by good luck there was some loose powder, and copper caps, and a snuff-box; upset the snuff, grabbed a handful of the mixture, and pulled hard at my horse. Next moment he was by my side, lifting his pistol to knock me over. So I gave him the mixture right in the face, and let him go by. Up went both his hands, and away went he and his horse, somewhere over the common out of sight. I just turned round, and walked quietly back. I didn't see the fun of accepting any more attacks in the rear. Then up rides number Two, a broad-faced young farmer on a big grey horse, blowing like a grampus. He pulled up short when we met, and stared, and I walked past him. You never saw a fellow look more puzzled, I had regularly stale-mated him. However, he took heart, and shouted, 'Had I met the Captain?' I said, 'A gentleman had ridden by on a bright bay?' 'That was he; which way had he gone?' So I pointed generally over the common, and number Two departed; and then down came the storm, and I turned again, and came on here."

"The Captain! It must have been Wurley, then, who fired at you."

"I don't know who it was. I only hope he won't be blinded."

"It's a strange business altogether," said Tom, looking into the fire; "I scarcely know what to think of it. We should never have pulled through but for you, that's certain."

"I know what to think of it well enough," said East. But now let's hear what happened to you. They didn't catch you, of course?"

"No, but it was touch and go. I thought it was all up at one time, for Harry would turn right across their line. But he knew what he was about; there was a bog between us, and they came on right into it, and we left them floundering."

"The convict seems to have his head about him, then. Where is he, by the way? I'm curious to have a look at him."

"Looking after the horses. I'll call him in. He ought to have something to drink."

Tom went to the door and called Harry, who came out from the rough shed which served as a stable, in his shirt, with a wisp of hay in his hand. He had stripped off coat and waistcoat, and braces, and had been warming himself by giving the horses a good dressing.

"Why, Harry, you haven't had anything," said Tom; "come across and have a glass of something hot."

Harry followed into the kitchen, and stood by the end of the screen, looking rather uncomfortable, while Tom poured him out a glass of the hot mixture, and the lieutenant looked him over with keen eyes.

"There, take that off. How are the horses?"

"Pretty fresh, Master Tom; but they'd be the better of a bran mash, or somethin' cumfable. I've spoke to the missus about it, and 'tis ready to put on the fire."

"That's right then. Let them have it as quick as you can."

"Then I med fetch it and warm it up here, sir?" said Harry.

"To be sure; the sooner the better."

Harry took off his glass, making a shy sort of duck with his head, accompanied by "your health, sir," to each of his entertainers, and then disappeared into the back kitchen, returned with the mash, which he put on the fire, and went off to the stable again.

"What do you think of him?" said Tom.

"I like to see a fellow let his braces down when he goes to work," said East.

"It's not every fellow who would be strapping away at those horses, instead of making himself at home in the back kitchen."

"No, it isn't," said East.

"Don't you like his looks now?"

"He's not a bad sort, your convict."

"I say, I wish you wouldn't call him names."

"Very good; your unfortunate friend, then. What are you going to do with him?"

"That's just what I've been puzzling about all the way here; what do you think!" And then they drew to the fire again, and began to talk over Harry's prospects. In some ten minutes he returned to the kitchen for the mash, and this time drew a complimentary remark from the lieutenant.

Harry was passionately fond of animals, and especially of horses, and they found it out quickly enough as they always do. The two hacks were by this time almost fresh again, with dry coats and feet well washed and cleansed; and while working at them Harry had been thinking over all he had heard that evening, and what with the work and what with his thoughts, found himself getting more hopeful every minute. No one who had seen his face an hour before on the heath would have believed it was the same man who was now patting and fondling the two hacks as they disposed of the mash he had prepared for them. He leant back against the manger, rubbing the ears of Tom's hack —the one which had carried double so well in their first flight, gently with his two hands, while the delighted beast bent down its head, and pressed it against him, and stretched its neck, expressing in all manner of silent ways its equine astonishment and satisfaction. By the light of the single dip, Harry's face grew shorter and shorter, until, at last, a quiet humorous look began to creep back into it.

As we have already taken the liberty of putting the thoughts of his betters into words, we must now do so for him; and, if he had expressed his thoughts in his own vernacular as he rubbed the hack's ears in the stable, his speech would have been much as follows:—

"How cums it as I be all changed like, as tho' sum un had tuk and rubbed all the downheartedness out o' me?—Here I be, two days out o' gaol, wi' nothin' in the world but the things I stands in—for in course I med just give up the bits o' things as is left at Daddy Collins's—and they all draggled wi' the wet, and I med be tuk in the mornin' and sent across the water; and yet I feels sum how as peert as a yukkel. So fur as I see, 'tis jest nothin' but talkin' wi' our Master Tom. What a fine thing 'tis to be a schollard. And yet seemin'ly 'tis nothin' but talk arter all's said and done. But 'tis allus the same; whenever I gets talkin' wi' he, it all cums out as smooth as crame. Fust time as ever I seen him since we wur boys he talked just as a do now; and then my poor mother died. Then he come in arter the funeral, and talked me up agen, till I thought as I wur to hev our cottage and all the land as I could do good by. But our cottage were took away, and my 'lotment besides Then cum last summer, and 'twur just the same agen arter his talk, but I got dree months auver that job. And now here I be wi' un agen, a runnin' from the constable, and

like to be tuk up and transpworted, and 'tis just the same—and I s'spose 'twill be just the same if ever I gets back, and sees un, and talks wi' un, if I be gwine to be hung.' 'Tis a wunnerful thing to be a schollard, to be able to make things look all straight when they be ever so akkerd and unked."

And then Harry left off rubbing the horse's ears; and, pulling the damp piece of paper which Tom had given him, out of his breeches' pocket, proceeded to flatten it out tenderly on the palm of his hand, and read it by the light of the dip, when the landlady came to inform him that the gentlefolk wanted him in the kitchen. So he folded his treasure up again, and went off to the kitchen. He found Tom standing with his back to the fire, while the lieutenant was sitting at the table, writing on a scrap of paper, which the landlady had produced after much hunting over of drawers. Tom began, with some little hesitation :—

"Oh Harry, I've been talking matters over with my friend here, and I've changed my mind. It won't do after all for you to stay about at railway work, or anything of that sort. You see you wouldn't be safe. They'd be sure to trace you, and you'd get into trouble about this day's work. And then, after all, it's a very poor opening for a young fellow like you. Now, why shouldn't you enlist into Mr. East's regiment? You'll be in his company, and it's a splendid profession. What do you say now?"

East looked up at poor Harry, who was quite taken aback at this change in his prospects, and could only mutter, that he had never turned his mind to "sodgerin."

"It's just the thing for you," Tom went on. "You can write and keep accounts, and you'll get on famously. Ask Mr. East if you won't. And don't you fear about matters at home. You'll see that'll all will come right. I'll pledge you my word it will and I'll take care that you shall hear everything that goes on there: and, depend upon it, it's your best chance. You'll be back at Englebourn as a serjeant in no time, and be able to snap your fingers at them all. You'll come with us to Steventon station, and take the night train to London, and then in the morning go to Whitehall, and find Mr. East's sergeant. He'll give you a note to him, and they'll send you on to Chatham, where the regiment is. You think it's the best thing for him, don't you?" said Tom, turning to East.

"Yes; I think you'll do very well if you only keep steady. Here's a note to the sergeant, and I shall be back at Chatam in a day or two myself."

Harry took the note mechanically; he was quite unable yet to make any resistance.

"And now get something to eat as quick as you can, for we ought to be off. The horses are all right, I suppose?"

"Yes, Master Tom." said Harry, with an appealing look.

"Where are your coat and waistcoat, Harry?"

"They be in in the stable, sir."

"In the stable! Why, they're all wet then still?"

"Oh, 'tis no odds about that, Master Tom."

"No odds! Get them in directly, and put them to dry here."

So Harry Winburn went off to the stable to fetch his clothes.

"He's a fine fellow," said East, getting up and coming to the fire; "I've taken a fancy to him, but he doesn't fancy enlisting."

"Poor fellow! he has to leave his sweetheart. It's a sad business, but it's the best thing for him, and you'll see he'll go."

Tom was right. Poor Harry came in and dried his clothes, and got his supper; and while he was eating it, and all along the road afterwards, till they reached the station at about eleven o'clock, pleaded in his plain way with Tom against leaving his own country side. And East listened silently, and liked him better and better.

Tom argued with him gently, and turned the matter round on all sides, putting the most hopeful face upon it; and, in the end, talked first himself, and then Harry, into the belief that it was the best thing that could have happened to him, and more likely than any other course of action tobring everything right between him and all the folk at Engleourn.

So Harry got into the train at Steventon in pretty good heart, with his fare paid, and half-a-sovereign in his pocket more and more impressed in his mind with what a wonderful thing it was to be "a schollard."

The two friends rode back to Oxford at a good pace. They had both of them quite enough to think about, and were not in the humour for talk had place and time served, so that scarce a word passed between them till they had

left their horses at the livery stables, and were walking through the silent streets, a few minutes before midnight. Then East broke silence.

"I can't make out how you do it. I'd give half-a-year's pay to get the way of it."

"The way of what? What are you talking about?"

"Why, your way of shutting your eyes, and going in blind."

"Well, that's a queer wish for a fighting man," said Tom, laughing. "We always thought a rusher no good at school, and that the thing to learn was, to go in with your own eyes open, and shut up other people's."

"Ah, but we hadn't cut our eye-teeth then. I look at these things from a professional point of view. My business is to get fellows to shut their eyes tight, and I begin to think you can't do it as it should be done, without shutting your own first."

"I don't take."

"Why, look at the way you talked your convict—I beg your pardon—your unfortuate friend—into enlisting to-night. You talked as if you believed every word you were saying to him."

"So I did."

"Well, I should like to have you for a recruiting sergeant, if you could only drop that radical bosh. If I had had to do it, instead of enlisting, he would have gone straight off and hung himself in the stable."

"I'm glad you didn't try your hand at it then."

"Look again at me. Do you think any one but such a—well, I don't want to say anything uncivil—a headlong dog like you could have got me into such a business as to-day's? Now I want to be able to get other fellows to make just such fools of themselves as I've made of myself to-day. How do you do it?"

"I don't know, unless it is that I can't help always looking at the best side of things myself, and so—"

"Most things haven't got a best side."

"Well, at the pretty good side, then."

"Nor a pretty good one."

"If they haven't got a pretty good one, it don't matter how you look at them, I should think."

"No, I don't believe it does—much. Still, I should like to be able to make a fool of myself, too, when I want—with the view of getting others to do ditto, of course."

"I wish I could help you, old fellow; but I don't see my way to it."

"I shall talk to your regimental doctor about it, and get put through a course of fool's-diet before we start for India."

"Flap doodle, they call it, what fools are fed on. But it's odd that you should have broken out in this place, when all the way home I've been doing nothing but envying you your special talent."

"What's that?"

"Just the opposite one—the art of falling on your feet. I should like to exchange with you."

"You'd make a precious bad bargain of it, then."

"There's twelve striking. I must knock in. Good night. You'll be round to breakfast at nine."

"All right. I believe in your breakfasts, rather," said East, as they shook hands at the gate of St. Ambrose, into which Tom disappeared, while the lieutenant strolled back to the Mitre.

CHAPTER XLII.

THIRD YEAR.

EAST returned to his regiment in a few days, and at the end of the month the gallant 101st embarked for India. Tom wrote several letters to the lieutenant, inclosing notes to Harry, with gleanings of news from Englebourn, where his escape on the night of the riot had been a nine-days' wonder; and, now that he was fairly "'listed," and out of the way, public opinion was beginning to turn in his favor. In due course a letter arrived from the lieutenant, dated Cape Town, giving a prosperous account of the voyage so far. East did not say much about "your convict," as he still insisted on calling Harry; but the little he did say was very satisfactory, and Tom sent off this part of the letter to Katie, to whom he had confided the whole story, entreating her to make the best use of it in the interest of the young soldier. And, after this out-of-the-way beginning, he settled down into the usual routine of his Oxford life.

This change in his opinions and objects of interest brought him now into more intimate relations with a set of

whom he had as yet seen little. For want of a better name, we may call them "the party of progress." At their parties, instead of practical jokes, and boisterous mirth, and talk of boats, and bats, and guns, and horses, the highest and deepest questions of morals, and politics, and metaphysics, were discussed, and discussed with a freshness and enthusiasm which is apt to wear off when doing has to take the place of talking, but has a strange charm of its own while it lasts, and is looked back to with loving regret by those for whom it is no longer a possibility.

With this set Tom soon fraternized, and drank in many new ideas, and took to himself also many new crotchets besides those with which he was already weighted. Almost all his new acquaintances were Liberal in politics, but a few only were ready to go all lengths with him. They were all Union men, and Tom, of course, followed the fashion, and soon propounded theories in that institution which gained him the name of Chartist Brown.

There was a strong mixture of self-conceit in it all. He had a kind of idea that he had discovered something which it was creditable to have discovered, and that it was a very fine thing to have all these feelings for, and sympathies with, "the masses," and to believe in democracy, and "glorious humanity," and "a good time coming," and I know not what other big matters. And, although it startled and pained him at first to hear himself called ugly names, which he had hated and despised from his youth up, and to know that many of his old acquaintances looked upon him, not simply as a madman, but as a madman with snobbish proclivities; yet, when the first plunge was over, there was a good deal on the other hand which tickled his vanity, and was far from being unpleasant.

To do him justice, however, the disagreeables were such that, had there not been sum genuine belief at the bottom, he would certainly have been headed back very speedily in to the fold of political and social orthodoxy. As it was, amidst the cloud of sophisms, and platitudes, and big one-sided ideas half-mastered, which filled his thoughts and overflowed in his talk, there was growing in him and taking firmer hold on him daily a true and broad sympathy for men as men, and especially for poor men as poor men, and a righteous and burning hatred against all laws, customs, or notions, which, according to his light, either were or seemed to be setting aside, or putting anything else in the place

of, or above the man. It was with him the natural outgrowth of the child's and boy's training (though his father would have been much astonished to be told so), and the instincts of those early days were now getting rapidly set into habits and faiths, and becoming a part of himself.

In this stage of his life, as in so many former ones, Tom got great help from his intercourse with Hardy, now the rising tutor of the college. Hardy was travelling much the same road himself as our hero, but was somewhat further on, and had come into it from a different country, and though quite other obstacles. Their early lives had been very different; and, both by nature and from long and severe self-restraint and discipline, Hardy was much the less impetuous and demonstrative of the two. He did not rush out, therefore (as Tom was too much inclined to do), the moment he had seized hold of the end of a new idea which he felt to be good for *him* and what *he* wanted, and brandish it in the face of all comers, and think himself a traitor to the truth if he wasn't trying to make everybody he met with eat it. Hardy, on the contrary, would test his new idea, and turn it over, and prove it as far as he could, and try to get hold of the whole of it, and ruthlessly strip off any tinsel or rose-pink sentiment with which it might happen to be mixed up.

Often and often did Tom suffer under this severe method, and rebel against it, and accuse his friend, both to his face and in his own secret thoughts, of coldness, and want of faith, and all manner of other sins of omission and commission. In the end, however, he generally came round, with more or less of rebellion, according to the severity of the treatment, and acknowledge that, when Hardy brought him down from riding the high horse, it was not without good reason, and that the dust in which he was rolled was always most wholesome dust.

For instance, there was no phrase more frequently in the mouths of the party of progress than "the good cause." It was a fine big-sounding phrase, which could be used with great effect in perorations of speeches at the Union, and was sufficiently indefinite to be easily defended from ordinary attacks, while it saved him who used it the trouble of ascertaining accurately for himself or settling for his hearers what it really did mean, But, however satisfactory it might be before promiscuous audiences, and so long as vehement assertion or declaration was all that was required to uphold

it, this same "good cause" was liable to come to much grief when it had to get itself defined. Hardy was particularly given to persecution on this subject, when he could get Tom, and, perhaps, one or two others, in a quiet room by themselves. While professing the utmost sympathy for "the good cause," and a hope as strong as theirs that all its enemies might find themselves suspended to lamp-posts as soon as possible, he would pursue it into corners from which escape was most difficult, asking it and its supporters what it exactly was, and driving them from one cloud-land to another, and from "the good cause" to the "people's cause," "the cause of labor," and other like troublesome definitions, until the great idea seemed to have no shape or existence any longer even in their own brains.

But Hardy's persecution, provoking as it was for the time, never went to the undermining of any real conviction in the minds of his juniors, or the shaking of anything which did not need shaking, but only helped them to clear their ideas and brains as to what they were talking and thinking about, and gave them glimpses—soon clouded over again, but most useful, nevertheless—of the truth, that there were a good many knotty questions to be solved before a man could be quite sure that he had found out the way to set the world thoroughly to rights, and heal all the ills that flesh is heir to.

Hardy treated another of his friend's most favorite notions even with less respect than this one of "the good cause." Democracy, that "universal democracy," which their favorite author had recently declared to be "an inevitable fact of the days in which we live," was, perhaps, on the whole the pet idea of the small section of liberal young Oxford, with whom Tom was now hand and glove. They lost no opportunity of worshipping it, and doing battle for it ; and, indeed, most of them did very truly believe that that state of the world which this universal democracy was to bring about, and which was coming no man could say how soon, was to be in fact that age of peace and good-will which men had dreamt of in all times, when the lion should lie down with the kid, and nation should not vex nation any more.

After hearing something to this effect from Tom on several occasions, Hardy cunningly lured him to his rooms on the pretence of talking over the prospects of the boat club, and then, having seated him by the fire, which he himself

proceeded to assault gently with the poker, propounded suddenly to him the question,

"Brown, I should like to know what you mean by 'democracy?'"

Tom at once saw the trap into which he had fallen, and made several efforts to break away, but unsuccessfully; and, being seated to a cup of tea, and allowed to smoke, was then and there grievously oppressed, and mangled, and sat upon, by his oldest and best friend. He took his ground carefully, and propounded only what he felt sure that Hardy himself would at once accept,—what no man of any worth could possibly take exception to. "He meant much more," he said, "than this; but for the present purpose it would be enough for him to say that, whatever else it might mean, democracy in his mouth always meant that every man should have a share in the government of his country."

Hardy, seeming to acquiesce, and making a sudden change in the subject of their talk, decoyed his innocent guest away from the thought of democracy for a few minutes, by holding up to him the flag of hero-worship, in which worship Tom was, of course, a sedulous believer. Then, having involved him in most difficult country, his persecutor opened fire upon him from masked batteries of the most deadly kind, the guns being all from the armory of his own prophets.

"You long for the rule of the ablest man, everywhere, at all times? To find your ablest man, and then give him power, and obey him—that you hold to be about the highest act of wisdom which a nation can be capable of?"

"Yes; and you know you believe that to, Hardy, just as firmly as I do."

"I hope so. But then, how about our universal democracy, and every man having a share in the government of his country?"

Tom felt that his flank was turned; in fact, the contrast of his two beliefs had never struck him vividly before, and he was consequently much confused. But Hardy went on tapping a big coal gently with the poker, and gave him time to recover himself and collect his thoughts.

"I don't mean, of course, that every man is to have an actual share in the government," he said at last.

"But every man is somehow to have a share; and, if not an actual one, I can't see what the proposition comes to."

"I call it having a share in the government when a man has share in saying who shall govern him."

"Well, you'll own that's a very different thing. But let's see; will that find our wisest governor for us—letting all the most foolish men in the nation have a say as to who he is to be?"

"Come now, Hardy, I've heard you say that you are for manhood suffrage."

"That's another question; you let in another idea there. At present we are considering whether the *vox populi* is the best test for finding your best man. I'm afraid all history is against you."

"That's a good joke. Now, there I defy you, Hardy."

"Begin at the beginning, then, and let us see."

"I suppose you'll say, then, that the Egyptian and Babylonian empires were better than the little Jewish republic."

"Republic! well, let that pass. But I never heard that the Jews elected Moses, or any of the judges."

"Well, never mind the Jews; they're an exceptional case: you can't argue from them."

"I don't admit that. I believe just the contrary. But go on."

"Well, then, what do you say to the glorious Greek republics, with Athens at the head of them?"

"I say that no nation ever treated their best men so badly. I see I must put on a lecture in Aristophanes for your special benefit. Vain, irritable, shallow, suspicious old Demus, with his two oboli in his cheek, and doubting only between Cleon and the sausage-sellers, which he shall choose for his wisest man—not to govern, but to serve his whims and caprices. You must call another witness, I think."

"But that's a caricature."

"Take the picture, then, out of Thucydides, Plato, Xenophon, how you will—you won't mend the matter much. You shouldn't go so fast, Brown; you won't mind my saying so, I know. You don't get clear in your own mind before you pitch into every one who comes across you, and so do your own side (which I admit is mostly the right one) more harm than good."

Tom couldn't stand being put down so summarily, and fought over the ground from one country to another, from Rome to the United States, with all the arguments he could muster, but with little success. That unfortunate first admission of his, he felt it throughout, like a mill stone

round his neck, and could not help admitting to himself, when he left, that there was a good deal in Hardy's concluding remark,—"You'll find it rather a tough business to get your 'universal democracy,' and 'government by the wisest,' to pull together in one coach."

Notwithstanding all such occasional reverses and cold baths, however, Tom went on strengthening himself in his new opinions, and maintaining them with all the zeal of a convert. The shelves of his bookcase, and the walls of his rooms, soon began to show signs of the change which was taking place in his ways of looking at men and things. Hitherto a framed engraving of George III. had hung over his mantle-piece; but early in this, his third year, the frame had disappeared for a few days, and when it reappeared, the solemn face of John Milton looked out from it, while the honest monarch had retired into a portfolio. A facsimile of Magna Charta soon displaced a large colored print of "A Day with the Pycheley;" and soon afterwards the death-warrant of Charles I. with its grim and resolute rows of signatures and seals, appeared on the wall in a place of honor, in the neighborhood of Milton.

Squire Brown was passing through Oxford, and paid his son a visit soon after this last arrangement had been completed. He dined in hall, at the high table, being still a member of the college, and afterwards came with Hardy to Tom's rooms to have a quiet glass of wine, and spend the evening with his son and a few of his friends, who had been asked to meet "the governor."

Tom had a struggle with himself whether he should not remove the death-warrant into his bedroom for the evening, and had actually taken it down with this view; but in the end he could not stomach such a backsliding, and so restored it to its place. "I have never concealed my opinions from my father," he thought, "though I don't think he quite knows what they are. But if he doesn't, he ought, and the sooner the better. I should be a sneak to try to hide them. I know he won't like it, but he is always just and fair, and will make allowances. At any rate, up it goes again."

And so he re-hung the death-warrant, but with the devout secret hope that his father might not see it.

The wine-party went off admirably. The men were nice, gentlemanly, intelligent fellows; and the squire, who had been carefully planted by Tom with his back to the

death-warrant, enjoyed himself very much. At last they all went, except Hardy; and now the nervous time approached. For a short time longer the three sat at the wine-table, while the squire enlarged upon the great improvement in young men, and the habits of the University, especially in the matter of drinking. Tom had only opened three bottles of port. In his time the men would have drunk certainly not less than a bottle a man; and other like remarks he made as he sipped his coffee, and then, pushing back his chair, said, "Well, Tom, hadn't your servant better clear away, and then we can draw round the fire, and have a talk."

"Wouldn't you like to take a turn while he is clearing? There's the Martyr's Memorial you haven't seen."

"No, thank you. I know the place well enough. I don't come to walk about in the dark. We sha'n't be in your man's way."

And so Tom's scout came in to clear away, took out the extra leaves of the table, put on the cloth, and laid tea. During these operations Mr. Brown was standing with his back to the fire, looking about him as he talked: when there was more space to move in, he began to walk up and down, and very soon took to remarking the furniture and arrangements of the room. One after the other the pictures came under his notice,—most of them escaped without comment, the squire simply pausing a moment, and then taking up his walk again. Magna Charta drew forth his hearty approval. It was a capital notion to hang such things on his walls, instead of bad prints of steeple-chases, or trash of that sort. "Ah, here's something else of the same kind. Why, Tom, what's this?" said the squire, as he paused before the death-warrant. There was a moment or two of dead silence, while the squire's eyes ran down the names, from Jo. Bradshaw to Miles Corbet; and then he turned, and came and sat down opposite to his son. Tom expected his father to be vexed, but was not the least prepared for the tone of pain, and sorrow, and anger, in which he first inquired, and then remonstrated.

For some time past the squire and his son had not felt so comfortable together as of old. Mr. Brown had been annoyed by much that Tom had done in the case of Harry Winburn, though he did not know all. There had sprung up a barrier somehow or other between them, neither of them knew how. They had often felt embarrassed at being

left alone together during the last year, and found that there were topics which they could not talk upon, which they avoided by mutual consent. Every now and then the constraint and embarrassment fell off for a short time, for at bottom they loved and appreciated one another heartily; but the divergences in their thoughts and habits had become serious, and seemed likely to increase rather than not. They felt keenly the chasm between the two generations; as they looked at one another from the opposite banks, each in his secret heart blamed the other in great measure for that which was the fault of neither. Mixed with the longings which each felt for a better understanding was enough of reserve and indignation to prevent them from coming to it. The discovery of their differences was too recent, and they were too much alike in character and temper, for either to make large enough allowances for, or to be really tolerant of the other.

This was the first occassion on which they had come to out-spoken and serious difference; and, though the collision had been exceedingly painful to both, yet, when they parted for the night, it was with a feeling of relief that the ice had been thoroughly broken. Before his father left the room, Tom had torn the facsimile of the death-warrant out of its frame, and put it in the fire, protesting, however, at the same time, that, though "he did this out of deference to his father, and was deeply grieved at having given him pain, he could not and would not give up his honest convictions, or pretend that they were changed, or even shaken."

The squire walked back to his hotel deeply moved. Who can wonder? He was a man full of living and vehement convictions. One of his early recollections had been the arrival in England of the news of the beheading of Louis XVI. and the doings of the reign of terror. He had been bred in the times when it was held impossible for a gentleman or a Christian to hold such views as his son had been maintaining, and, like many of the noblest Englishmen of his time had gone with and accepted the creed of the day.

Tom remained behind, dejected and melancholy; now accusing his father of injustice and bigotry, now longing to go after him, and give up everything. What were all his opinions and convictions compared with his father's confidence and love? At breakfast the next morning, however, after each of them had had time for thinking over what had

passed, they met with a cordiality which was as pleasant to each as it was unlooked for; and from this visit of his father to him at Oxford Tom dated a new and more satisfactory epoch in their intercourse.

The fact had begun to dawn on the squire that the world had changed a good deal since his time. He saw that young men were much improved in some ways, and acknowledged the fact heartily; on the other hand, they had taken up with a lot of new notions which he could not understand, and thought mischievous and bad. Perhaps Tom might get over them as he got to be older and wiser, and in the meantime he must take the evil with the good. At any rate he was too fair a man to try to dragoon his son out of anything which he really believed. Tom on his part gratefully accepted the change in his father's manner, and took all means of showing his gratitude by consulting and talking freely to him on such subjects as they could agree upon, which were numerous, keeping in the back-ground the questions which had provoked painful discussions between them. By degrees these even could be tenderly approached; and, now that they were approached in a different spirit, the honest beliefs of the father and son no longer looked so monstrous to one another, the hard and sharp outlines began to wear off, and the views of each of them to be modified. Thus, bit by bit, by a slow but sure process, a better understanding than ever was re-established between them.

This beginning of a better state of things in his relations with his father consoled Tom for many other matters that seemed to go wrong with him, and was a constant bit of bright sky to turn to when the rest of his horizon looked dark and dreary, as it did often enough.

For it proved a very trying year to him, this his third and last year at the University; a year full of large dreams and small performances, of unfulfilled hopes and struggles to set himself right, ending ever more surely in failure and disappointment. The common pursuits of the place had lost their freshness, and with it much of their charm. He was beginning to feel himself in a cage, and to beat against the bars of it.

Often, in spite of all his natural hopefulness, his heart seemed to sicken and turn cold, without any apparent reason; his old pursuits palled on him, and he scarcely cared to turn to new ones. What was it that made life so blank

to him at these times? How was it that he could not keep the spirit within him alive and warm?

It was easier to ask such questions than to get an answer. Was it not this place he was living in, and the ways of it? No, for the place and its ways were the same as ever, and his own way of life in it better than ever before. Was it the want of sight or tidings of Mary? Sometimes he thought so, and then cast the thought away as treason. His love for her was ever sinking deeper into him, and raising and purifying him. Light and strength and life came from that source; craven weariness and coldness of heart, come from whence they might, were not from that quarter. But precious as his love was to him, and deeply as it affected his whole life, he felt that there must be something beyond it—that its full satisfaction would not be enough for him. The bed was too narrow for a man to stretch himself on. What he was in search of must underlie and embrace his human love, and support it. Beyond and above all private and personal desires and hopes and longings, he was conscious of a restless craving and feeling about after something which he could not grasp, and yet which was not avoiding him, which seemed to be mysteriously laying hold of him and surrounding him.

The routine of chapels, and lectures, and reading for degree, boating, cricketing, Union-debating—all well enough in their way—left this vacuum unfilled. There was a great outer visible world, the problems and puzzles of which were rising before him and haunting him more and more; and a great inner and invisible world opening round him in awful depth. He seemed to be standing on the brink of each—now, shivering and helpless, feeling like an atom about to be whirled into the great flood and carried he knew not where—now, ready to plunge in and take his part, full of hope and belief that he was meant to buffet in the strength of a man with the seen and the unseen, and be subdued by neither.

In such a year as this a bit of steady, bright blue sky was a boon beyond all price, and so he felt it to be. And it was not only with his father that Tom regained lost ground this year. He was in a state of mind in which he could not bear to neglect or lose any particle of human sympathy, and so he turned to old friendships, and revived the correspondence with several of his old school-fellows, and particularly with Arthur, to the great delight of the latter, who

had mourned bitterly over the few half-yearly lines, all he had got from Tom of late, in answer to his own letters, which had themselves, under the weight of neglect, gradually dwindled down to mere formal matters. A specimen of the later correspondence may fitly close the chapter :—

"St. Ambrose.

"Dear Geordie,—I can hardly pardon you for having gone to Cambridge, though you have got a Trinity scholarship—which I suppose is, on the whole, quite as good a thing as anything of the sort you could have got up here. I had so looked forward to having you here though, and now I feel that we shall probably scarcely ever meet. You will go your way and I mine; and one alters so quickly, and gets into such strange new grooves, that unless one sees a man about once a week at least, you may be just like strangers when you are thrown together again. If you had come up here it would have been all right, and we should have gone all through life as we were when I left school, and as I know we should be again in no time if you had come here. But now, who can tell?

"What makes me think so much of this is a visit of a few days that East paid me just before his regiment went to India. I feel that if he hadn't done it, and we had not met till he came back—years hence perhaps—we should never have been to one another what we shall be now. The break would have been too great. Now it's all right. You would have liked to see the old fellow grown into a man but not a bit altered—just the quiet, old way, pooh-poohing you, and pretending to care for nothing, but ready to cut the nose off his face, or go through fire and water for you at a pinch, if you'll only let him go his own way about it and have his grumble, and say that he does it all from the worst possible motives,

"But we must try not to lose hold of one another, Geordie. It would be a bitter day to me if I thought anything of the kind could ever happen again. We must write more to one another. I've been awfully lazy, I know, about it for this last year and more; but then I always thought you would be coming up here, and so that it didn't matter much. But now I will turn over a new leaf, and write to you about my secret thoughts, my works and ways; and you must do it too. If we can only tide over the next year or two we shall get into plain sailing, and I suppose it will all go

right then. At least, I can't believe that one is likely to have many such up-and-down years in one's life as the last two. If one is, goodness knows where I shall end. You know the outline of what has happened to me from my letters, and the talks we have had in my flying visits to the old school; but you haven't a notion of the troubles of mind I've been in, and the changes I've gone through. I can hardly believe it myself when I look back. However, I'm quite sure I have *got on*; that's my great comfort. It is a strange blind sort of world, that's a fact, with lots of blind alleys, down which you go blundering in the fog after some seedy gas-light, which you take for the sun till you run against the wall at the end, and find out that the light is a gas-light, and that there's no thoroughfare. But for all that one does get on. You get to know the sun's light better and better, and to keep out of the blind alleys; and I am surer and surer every day, that there's always sunlight enough for every honest fellow—though I didn't think so a few months back— and a good sound road under his feet, if he will only step out on it.

"Talking of blind alleys puts me in mind of your last. Aren't you going down a blind alley, or something worse? There's no wall to bring you up, that I can see, down the turn you've taken; and then, what's the practical use of it all? What good would you do to yourself, or any one else, if you could get to the end of it? I can't for the life of me fancy, I confess, what you think will come of speculating about necessity and free will. I only know that I can hold out my hand before me, and can move it to the right or left, despite of all the powers in heaven or earth. As I sit here writing to you I can let into my heart, and give the reins to, all sorts of devil's passions, or to the Spirit of God. Well, that's enough for me. I *know* it of myself, and I believe you know it of yourself, and everybody knows it of themselves or himself; and why you can't be satisfied with that, passes my comprehension. As if one hasn't got puzzles enough, and bothers enough, under one's nose, without going a-field after a lot of metaphysical quibbles. No, I'm wrong,—not going a-field,—anything one has to go a-field for is all right. What a fellow meets outside himself he isn't responsible for, and must do the best he can with. But to go on for ever looking inside of one self, and groping about amongst one's own sensations, and ideas, and whimsies of one kind and another, I can't conceive a poorer line

of business than that. Don't you get into it now, that's a dear boy.

"Very likely you'll tell me you can't help it; that every one has his own difficulties, and must fight them out, and that mine are one sort, and yours another. Well, perhaps you may be right. I hope I'm getting to know that my plummet isn't to measure all the world. But it does seem a pity that men shouldn't be thinking about how to cure some of the wrongs which poor dear old England is pretty near dying of, instead of taking the edge off their brains, and spending all their steam in speculating about all kinds of things, which wouldn't make any poor man in the world—or rich one either, for that matter—a bit better off, if they were all found out, and settled to-morrow. But here I am at the end of my paper. Don't be angry at my jobation; but write me a long answer of your own free will, and believe me ever affectionately yours, "T. B."

CHAPTER XLIII.

AFTERNOON VISITORS.

Miss Mary Porter was sitting alone in the front drawing-room of her father's house, in Belgravia, on the afternoon of a summer's day of this same year. Two years and more have passed over her head since we first met her, and she may be a thought more sedate and better dressed, but there is no other change to be noticed in her. The room was for the most part much like other rooms in that part of the world. There were few luxuries in the way of furniture which fallen men can desire which were not to be found there; but, over and above this, there was an elegance in the arrangement of all the nick-nacks and ornaments, and an appropriateness and good taste in the placing of every piece of furniture and vase of flowers, which showed that a higher order of mind than the upholsterer's or housemaid's was constantly overlooking and working there. Everything seemed to be in its exact place, in the best place which could have been thought of for it, and to be the best thing which could have been thought of for the place. And yet this perfection did not strike you particularly at first, or sur-

prise you in any way, but sank into you gradually, so that, until you forced yourself to consider the matter, you could not in the least say why the room had such a very pleasant effect on you.

The young lady to whom this charm was chiefly owing was sitting by a buhl work-table, on which lay her embroidery and a book. She was reading a letter, which seemed deeply to interest her; for she did not hear the voice of the butler, who had just opened the door and disturbed her solitude, until he had repeated for the second time, "Mr. Smith." Then Mary jumped up, and, hastily folding her letter, put it into her pocket. She was rather provoked at having allowed herself to be caught there alone by afternoon visitors, and with the servants for having let any one in; nevertheless, she welcomed Mr. Smith with a cordiality of manner which perhaps rather more than represented her real feelings, and, with a "let mamma know," to the butler, set to work to entertain her visitor. She would have had no difficulty in doing this under ordinary circumstances, as all that Mr. Smith wanted was a good listener. He was a somewhat heavy and garrulous old gentleman, with many imaginary, and a few real troubles, the constant contemplation of which served to occupy the whole of his own time, and as much of his friends' as he could get them to give him. But scarcely had he settled himself comfortably in an easy chair opposite to his victim, when the butler entered again, and announced, "Mr. St. Cloud."

Mary was now no longer at her ease. Her manner of receiving her new visitor was constrained; and yet it was clear that he was on easy terms in the house. She asked the butler where his mistress was, and heard with vexation that she had gone out, but was expected home almost immediately. Charging him to let her mother know the moment she returned, Mary turned to her unwelcome task, and sat herself down again with such resignation as she was capable of at the moment. The conduct of her visitors was by no means calculated to restore her composure, or make her comfortable between them. She was sure that they knew one another; but neither of them would speak to the other. There the two sat on, each resolutely bent on tiring the other out; the elder crooning on to her in an undertone, and ignoring the younger, who in his turn put on an air of serene unconsciousness of the presence of his senior, and gazed about the room, and watched Mary, ma-

king occasional remarks to her as if no one else were present. On and on they sat, her only comfort being the hope that neither of them would have the conscience to stay on after the departure of the other.

Between them Mary was driven to her wits' end, and looked for her mother or for some new visitor to come to her help, as Wellington looked for the Prussians on the afternoon of June 18th. At length youth and insolence prevailed, and Mr. Smith rose to go. Mary got up too, and after his departure remained standing, in hopes that her other visitor would take the hint and follow the good example. But St. Cloud had not the least intention of moving.

"Really your good-nature is quite astonishing, Miss Porter," he said, leaning forward with his elbows on his knees, and following the pattern of one of the flowers on the carpet with his cane, which gave him the opportunity of showing his delicately gloved hand to advantage.

"Indeed, why do you think so?" she asked, taking up her embroidery, and pretending to begin working.

"Have I not good reason, after sitting this half-hour and seeing you enduring old Smith—the greatest bore in London? I don't believe there are three houses where the servants dare let him in. It would be as much as their places are worth. No porter could hope for a character who let him in twice in the season."

"Poor Mr. Smith," said Mary, smiling. "But you know we have no porter, and," she suddenly checked herself, and added gravely, "he is an old friend, and papa and mamma like him."

"But the wearisomeness of his grievances! Those three sons in the Plungers, and their eternal scrapes! How you could manage to keep a civil face! It was a masterpiece of polite patience."

"Indeed, I am very sorry for his troubles. I wonder where mamma can be? We are going to drive. Shall you be in the Park? I think it must be time for me to dress."

"I hope not. It is so seldom that I see you except in crowded rooms. Can you wonder that I should value such a chance as this?"

"Were you at the new opera last night?" asked Mary, carefully avoiding his eye, and sticking to her work, but scarcely able to conceal her nervousness and discomfort.

"Yes, I was there; but"——

"Oh, do tell me about it, then; I hear it was a great success."

"Another time. We can talk of the opera anywhere. Let me speak of something else. You must have seen, Miss Porter"——

"How can you think I will talk of anything till you have told me about the opera?" interrupted Mary, rapidly and nervously. "Was Grisi very fine? The chief part was composed for her, was it not? and dear old Lablache"

——

"I will tell you all about it presently, if you will let me, in five minutes, time—I only ask for five minutes"——

"Five minutes! Oh, no, not five seconds. I must hear about the new opera before I will listen to a word of anything else."

"Indeed, Miss Porter, you must pardon me for disobeying. But I may not have such a chance as this again for months."

With which prelude he drew his chair towards hers, and Mary was just trying to make up her mind to jump up and run right out of the room, when the door opened, and the butler walked in with a card on a waiter. Mary had never felt so relieved in her life, and could have hugged the solemn old domestic when he said, presenting the card to her,

"The gentleman asked if Mrs. or you were in, Miss, and told me to bring it up, and find whether you would see him on particular business. He's waiting in the hall."

"O yes, I know. Of course. Yes, say I will see him directly. I mean, ask him to come up now."

"Shall I show him into the library, Miss?"

"No, no; in here; do you understand?"

"Yes, Miss," replied the butler, with a deprecatory look at St. Cloud, as much as to say, "You see I can't help it," in answer to his impatient telegraphic signals. St. Cloud had been very liberal to the Porters' servant."

Mary's confidence had all come back. Relief was at hand. She could trust herself to hold St. Cloud at bay now, as it could not be for more than a few minutes. When she turned to him the nervousness had quite gone out of her manner, and she spoke in her old tone again, as she laid her embroidery aside.

"How lucky that you should be here. Look; I think you must be acquainted," she said, holding out the card which the butler had given her to St. Cloud,

He took it mechanically, and looked at it, and then crushed it in his hand, and was going to speak. She prevented him.

"I was right, I'm sure. You do know him?"

"I didn't see the name," he said almost fiercely.

"The name on the card which I gave you just now.—Mr. Grey. He is curate in one of the poor Westminster districts. You must remember him, for he was of your college. He was at Oxford with you. I made his acquaintance at the Commemoration. He will be so glad to meet an old friend."

St. Cloud was too much provoked to answer; and the next moment the door opened, and the butler annouced Mr. Grey.

Grey came into the room timidly, carrying his head a little down as usual, and glancing uncomfortably about in a manner which used to make Drysdale say that he always looked as though he had just been robbing a hen-roost. Mary went forward to meet him, holding out her hand cordially.

"I am so glad to see you," she said. "How kind of you to call when you are so busy! Mamma will be here directly. I think you must remember Mr. St. Cloud—Mr. Grey."

St. Cloud's patience was now quite gone. He drew himself up, making the slightest possible inclination towards Grey, and then, without taking any further notice of him, turned to Mary with a look which he meant to be full of pitying admiration for her, and contempt of her visitor; but, as she would not look at him, it was thrown away. So he made his bow and stalked out of the room, angrily debating with himself, as he went down the stairs, whether she could have understood him. He was so fully convinced of the sacrifice which a man in his position was making in paying serious attention to a girl with little fortune and no connexion, that he soon consoled himself in the belief that her embarrassment only arose from shyness, and that the moment he could explain himself she would be his obedient and grateful servant. Meantime Mary sat down opposite to the curate, and listened to him as he unfolded his errand awkwardly enough. An execution was threatened in the house of a poor struggling widow, whom Mrs. Porter had employed to do needlework occasionally, and who was behind with her rent through sickness. He was afraid that her things would be taken and sold in the morning, unless

she could borrow two sovereigns. He had so many claims on him that he could not lend her the money himself, and so had come out to see what he could do amongst those who knew her.

By the time Grey had arrived at the end of his story, Mary had made up her mind—not without a little struggle—to sacrifice the greater part of what was left of her quarter's allowance. After all, it would only be wearing cleaned gloves instead of new ones, and giving up her new riding-hat till next quarter. So she jumped up and said gaily, "Is that all, Mr. Grey? I have the money, and I will lend it her with pleasure. I will fetch it directly." She tripped off to her room, and soon came back with the money; and just then the butler came in with tea, and Mary asked Mr. Grey to take some. He looked tired, she said, and if he would wait a little time, he would see her mother, who would be sure to do something more for the poor woman.

Grey had risen to leave, and was standing, hat in hand, ready to go. He was in the habit of reckoning with himself strictly for every minute of his day, and was never quite satisfied with himself unless he was doing the most disagreeable thing which circumstances for the time being allowed him to do. But greater and stronger men than Grey, from Adam downwards, have yielded to the temptation, before which he now succumbed. He looked out of the corners of his eyes; and there was something so fresh and bright in the picture of the dainty little tea-service and the young lady behind it, the tea which she was beginning to pour out smelt so refreshing, and her hand and figure looked so pretty in the operation, that, with a sigh of departing resolution, he gave in, put his hat on the floor, and sat down opposite to the tempter.

Grey took a cup of tea, and then another. He thought he had never tasted anything so good. The delicious rich cream, and the tempting plate of bread and butter, were too much for him. He fairly gave way, and resigned himself to physical enjoyment, and sipped his tea, and looked over his cup at Mary, sitting there bright and kind, and ready to go on pouring out for him to any extent. It seemed to him as if an atmosphere of light and joy surrounded her, within the circle of which he was sitting and absorbing. Tea was the only stimulant that Grey ever took, and he had more need of it than usual, for he had given

away the chop, which was his ordinary dinner, to a starving woman. He was faint with fasting and the bad air of the hovels in which he had been spending his morning. The elegance of the room, the smell of the flowers, the charm of companionship with a young woman of his own rank, and the contrast of the whole to his common way of life, carried him away, and hopes and thoughts began to creep into his head to which he had long been a stranger. Mary did her very best to make his visit pleasant to him. She had a great respect for the self-denying life which she knew he was leading; and the nervousness and shyness of his manners were of a kind, which, instead of infecting her, gave her confidence, and made her feel quite at her ease with him. She was so grateful to him for having delivered her out of her recent embarrassment, that she was more than usually kind in her manner.

She saw how he was enjoying himself, and thought what good it must do him to forget his usual occupations for a short time. So she talked positive gossip to him, asked his opinion on riding-habits, and very soon was telling him the plot of a new novel which she had just been reading, with an animation and playfulness which would have warmed the heart of an anchorite. For a short quarter of an hour Grey resigned himself; but at the end of that time he became suddenly and painfully conscious of what he was doing, and stopped himself short in the middle of an altogether worldly compliment, which he detected himself in the act of paying to his too fascinating young hostess. He felt that retreat was his only chance, and so grasped his hat again, and rose with a deep sigh, and a sudden change of manner which alarmed Mary.

"I hope you are not ill, Mr. Grey?" she said, anxiously.

"No, not the least, thank you. But—but—in short, I must go to my work. I ought to apologize, indeed, for having stayed so long."

"Oh, you have not been here more than twenty minutes. Pray stay, and see mamma; she must be in directly."

"Thank you; you are very kind. I should like it very much, but indeed I cannot."

Mary felt that it would be no kindness to press it further, and so rose herself, and held out her hand. Grey took it, and it is not quite certain to this day whether he did not press it in that farewell shake more than was absolutely necessary. If he did, we may be quite sure that he admin-

istered exemplary punishment to himself afterwards for so doing. He would gladly have left now, but his over sensitive conscience forbade it. He had forgotten his office, he thought, hitherto, but there was time yet not to be altogether false to it. So he looked grave and shy again, and said,—

"You will not be offended with me, Miss Porter, if I speak to you as a clergyman?"

Mary was a little disconcerted, but answered almost immediately,—

"Oh, no. Pray say anything which you think you ought to say."

"I am afraid there must be a great temptation in living always in beautiful rooms like this, with no one but prosperous people. Do you not think so?"

"But one cannot help it. Surely, Mr. Grey you do not think it can be wrong?"

"No, not wrong. But it must be very trying. It must be very necessary to do something to lessen the temptation of such a life."

"I do not understand you. What could one do?"

"Might you not take up some work which would not be pleasant, such as visiting the poor?"

"I should be very glad; but we do not know any poor people in London."

"There are very miserable districts near here."

"Yes, and papa and mamma are very kind, I know, in helping whenever they can hear of a proper case. But it is so different from the country. There it is so easy and pleasant to go into the cottages where every one knows you, and most of the people work for papa, and one is sure of being welcomed, and that nobody will be rude. But here I should be afraid. It would seem so impertinent to go to people's houses of whom one knows nothing. I should never know what to say."

"It is not easy or pleasant duty which is the best for us. Great cities could never be evangelized, Miss Porter, if all ladies thought as you do."

"I think, Mr. Grey," said Mary, rather nettled, "that every one has not the gift of lecturing the poor, and setting them right; and, if they have not, they had better not try to do it. And as for the rest, there is plenty of the same kind of work to be done, I believe, amongst the people of one's own class."

"You are joking, Miss Porter."

"No, I am not joking at all. I believe that rich people are quite as unhappy as poor. Their troubles are not the same, of course, and are generally of their own making. But troubles of the mind are worse, surely, than troubles of the body?"

"Certainly; and it is the highest work of the ministry to deal with spiritual trials. But, you will pardon me for saying that I cannot think this is the proper work for—for—"

"For me, you would say. We must be speaking of quite different things, I am sure. I only mean that I can listen to the troubles and grievances of any one who likes to talk of them to me, and try to comfort them a little, and to make things look brighter, and to keep cheerful. It is not easy always even to do this."

"It is not, indeed. But would it not be easier if you could do as I suggest? Going out of one's own class, and trying to care for and help the poor, braces the mind more than anything else."

"You ought to know my cousin Katie," said Mary, glad to make a diversion; "that is just what she would say. Indeed, I think you must have seen her at Oxford; did you not?"

"I believe I had the honor of meeting her at the rooms of a friend. I think he said she was also a cousin of his."

"Mr. Brown, you mean? Yes; did you know him?"

"Oh, yes. You will think it strange, as we are so very unlike; but I knew him better than I knew almost any one."

"Poor Katie is very anxious about him. I hope you thought well of him. You do not think he is likely to go very wrong?"

"No, indeed. I could wish he were sounder on Church questions, but that may come. Do you know that he is in London?"

"I had heard so."

"He has been several times to my schools. He used to help me at Oxford, and has a capital way with the boys."

At this moment the clock on the mantel-piece struck a quarter. The sound touched some chord in Grey which made him grasp his hat again, and prepare for another attempt to get away.

"I hope you will pardon—" He pulled himself up short, in the fear lest he were going again to be false (as he deem-

ed it) to his calling, and stood the picture of nervous discomfort.

Mary came to his relief. "I am sorry you must go, Mr. Grey," she said; I should have so liked to have talked to you more about Oxford. You will call again soon, I hope?" At which last speech Grey, casting an imploring glance at her, muttered something which she could not catch, and fled from the room.

Mary stood looking dreamily out of the window for a few minutes, till the entrance of her mother roused her, and she turned to pour out a cup of tea for her.

"It is cold mamma dear; do let me make some fresh."

"No, thank you, dear; this will do very well," said Mrs. Porter; and she took off her bonnet and sipped the cold tea. Mary watched her silently for a minute, and then, taking the letter she had been reading, out of her pocket, said,

"I have a letter from Katie, mamma."

Mrs. Porter took the letter and read it; and, as Mary still watched, she saw a puzzled look coming over her mother's face. Mrs. Porter finished the letter, and then looked stealthily at Mary, who on her side was now busily engaged in putting up the tea-things.

"It is very embarrassing," said Mrs. Porter.

"What, mamma?"

"Oh, of course, my dear, I mean Katie's telling us of her cousin's being in London, and sending us his address—" and then she paused.

"Why, mamma?"

"Your papa will have to make up his mind whether he will ask him to the house. Katie would surely never have told him that she has written."

"Mr. and Mrs. Brown were so very kind. It would seem so strange, so ungrateful, not to ask him."

"I am afraid he is not the sort of young man—in short, I must speak to your papa."

Mrs. Porter looked hard at her daughter, who was still busied with the tea-things. She had risen, bonnet in hand, to leave the room; but now changed her mind, and, crossing to her daughter, put her arm round her neck. Mary looked up steadily into her eyes, then blushed slightly, and said quietly,

"No, mamma; indeed, it is not as you think."

Her mother stooped and kissed her, and left the room,

telling her to get dressed, as the carriage would be round in a few minutes.

Her trials for the day were not over. She could see by their manner at dinner that her father and mother had been talking about her. Her father took her to a ball in the evening, where they met St. Cloud, who fastened himself to them. She was dancing a quadrille, and her father stood near her, talking confidentially to St. Cloud. In the intervals of the dance scraps of their conversation reached her.

"You knew him, then, at Oxford?"

"Yes, very slightly."

"I should like to ask you now, as a friend—" Here Mary's partner reminded her that she ought to be dancing. When she had returned to her place again she heard—

"You think, then, that it was a bad business?"

"It was notorious in the college. We never had any doubt on the subject."

"My niece has told Mrs. Potter that there really was nothing wrong in it."

"Indeed? I am happy to hear it."

"I should like to think well of him, as he is a connexion of my wife. In other respects now—" Here again she was carried away by the dance. When she returned, she caught the end of the sentence of St. Cloud's, "You will consider what I have said in confidence?"

"Certainly," answered Mr. Porter; "and I am exceedingly obliged to you;" and then the dance was over and Mary returned to her father's side. She had never enjoyed a ball less than this, and persuaded her father to leave early, which he was delighted to do."

When she reached her own room Mary took off her wreath and ornaments, and then sat down and fell into a brown study, which lasted for some time. At last she roused herself with a sigh, and thought she had never had so tiring a day, though she could hardly tell why, and felt half inclined to have a good cry, if she could only have made up her mind what about. However, being a sensible young woman, she resisted the temptation, and hardly taking the trouble to roll up her hair, went to bed and slept soundly.

Mr. Porter found his wife sitting up for him; they were evidently both full of the same subject.

"Well, dear?" she said, as he entered the room.

Mr. Porter put down his candle, and shook his head.

Their occupation had naturally led to discussions on the advantages of emigration, the delights of clearing one's own estate, building one's own house, and getting away from conventional life with a few tried friends. Of course the pictures which were painted included foregrounds with beautiful children playing about the clearing, and graceful women, wives of the happy squatters, flitting in and out of the log houses and sheds, clothed and occupied after the manner of our ideal grandmothers; with the health and strength of Amazons, the refinement of high-bred ladies, and wondorous skill in all domestic works, confections, and contrivances. The log-houses would also contain fascinating select libraries, continually reinforced from home, sufficient to keep all the dwellers in the happy clearing in communion with all the highest minds of their own and former generations. Wonderous games in the neighboring forest, dear old home customs established and taking root in the wilderness, with ultimate dainty flower gardens, conservatories, and pianofortes—a millennium on a small scale, with universal education, competence, prosperity, and equal rights! Such castle-building, as an accompaniment to the hard exercise of woodcraft, worked wonders for Tom in the next week, and may be safely recommended to parties in like evil case with him.

But more practical discussions were not neglected, and it was agreed that they should make a day at Englebourn together before their return to Oxford, Hardy undertaking to invade the Rectory with the view of re-establishing his friend's character there.

Tom wrote a letter to Katie to prepare her for a visit. The day after the ancient elm was fairly disposed of they started early for Englebourn, and separated at the entrance to the village—Hardy proceeding to the Rectory to fulfill his mission, which he felt to be rather an embarrassing one, and Tom to look after the constable, or whoever else could give him information about Harry.

He arrived at the "Red Lion," their appointed trysting-place, before Hardy, and spent a restless half-hour in the porch and bar waiting for his return. At last Hardy came, and Tom hurried him into the inn's best room, where bread and cheese and ale awaited them, and, as soon as the hostess could be got out of the room, began impatiently—

"Well you have seen her?"

"Yes, I have come straight here from the Rectory."

shouldn't take the slightest notice of me all the time I was in London. I shouldn't have wondered if you hadn't explained; but after that, and after you had told them my direction, and when they knew that I was within five minutes' walk of their house constantly (for they knew all about Grey's schools, and that I was there three or four times a-week), I do think it was too bad. However, as I was going to tell you, I went at last, for I couldn't leave town without trying to see her; and I believe I have finished it all off. I don't know. I'm very low about it, at any rate, and want to tell you all that passed, and to hear what you think. I have no one to consult but you, Katie. What should I do without you? But you were born to help and comfort all the world. I shan't rest till I know what you think about this last crisis in my history.

"I put off going till my last day in town, and then called twice. The first time, 'not at home.' But I was determined now to see somebody and make out something; so I left my card, and a message that, as I was leaving town next day, I would call again. When I called again at 6 o'clock, I was shown into the library, and presently your uncle came in. I felt very uncomfortable, and I think he did too; but he shook hands cordially enough, asked why I had not called before, and said he was sorry to hear I was going out of town so soon. Do you believe he meant it? I didn't. But it put me out, because it made it look as if it had been my fault that I hadn't been there before. I said I didn't know that he would have liked me to call, but I felt that he had got the best of the start.

"Then he asked after all at home, and talked of his boys, and how they were getting on at school. By this time I had got my head again; so I went back to my calling, and said that I had felt that I could never come to their house as a common acquaintance, and, as I did not know whether they would ever let me come in any other capacity, I had kept away till now.

"Your uncle didn't like it, I know; for he got up and walked about, and then said he didn't understand me. Well, I was quite reckless by this time. It was my last chance, I felt; so I looked hard into my hat, and said that I had been over head and ears in love with Mary for two years. Of course there was no getting out of the business after that. I kept on staring into my hat; so I don't know how he took it; but the first thing he said was that he had had some sus-

picions of this, and now my confession gave him a right to ask me several questions. In the first place, had I ever spoken to her? No; never directly. What did I mean by directly? I meant that I had never either spoken or written to her on the subject—in fact, I hadn't seen her except at a distance for the last two years—but I could not say that she might not have found it out from my manner. Had I ever told any one else? No. And this was quite true, Katie, for both you and Hardy found it out.

"He took a good many turns before speaking again. Then he said I had acted as a gentleman hitherto, and he should be very plain with me. Of course I must see that, looking at my prospects and his daughter's, it could not be an engagement which he could look on with much favor from a worldly point of view. Nevertheless, he had the highest respect and regard for my family, so that, if in some years' time I was in a position to marry, he should not object on this score; but there were other matters which were in his eyes of more importance. He had heard (who could have told him?) that I had taken up very violent opinions—opinions which, to say nothing more of them, would very much damage my prospects of success in life; and that I was in the habit of associating with the advocates of such opinions —persons who, he must say, were not fit companions for a gentleman—and of writing violent articles in low revolutionary newspapers, such as the *Wessex Freeman*. Yes, I confessed I had written. Would I give up these things? I had a great mind to say flat, no, and I believe I ought to have; but as his tone was kind, I couldn't help trying to meet him. So I said I would give up writing or speaking publicly about such matters, but I couldn't pretend not to believe what I did believe. Perhaps, as my opinions had altered so much already, very likely they might again.

"He seemed to be rather amused at that, and said he sincerely hoped they might. But now came the most serious point: he had heard very bad stories of me at Oxford, but he would not press me with them. There were too few young men whose lives would bear looking into for him to insist much on such matters, and he was ready to let bygones be bygones. But I must remember that he had himself seen me in one very awkward position. I broke in, and said I had hoped that had been explained to him. I could not defend my Oxford life; I could not defend myself as to this particular case at one time; but there had been

nothing in it that I was ashamed of since before the time I knew his daughter.

"On my honour had I absolutely and entirely broken off all relations with her? He had been told that I still kept up a correspondence with her.

"Yes, I still wrote to her, and saw her occasionally; but it was only to give her news of a young man from her village, who was now serving in India. He had no other way of communicating with her.

"It was a most curious arrangement; did I mean that this young man was going to be married to her?

"I hoped so.

"Why should he not write to her at once, if they were engaged to be married?

"They were not exactly engaged; it was rather hard to explain. Here your uncle seemed to lose patience, for he interrupted me and said, 'Really it must be clear to me, as a reasonable man, that, if this connexion were not absolutely broken off, there must be an end of everything, so far as his daughter was concerned. Would I give my word of honor to break it off at once, and completely?' I tried to explain again; but he would have nothing but 'yes' or 'no.' Dear Katie, what could I do? I have written to Patty that, till I die, she may always reckon on me as on a brother; and I promised Harry never to lose sight of her, and to let her know everything that happens to him. Your uncle would not hear me; so I said, No. And he said, 'Then our interview had better end,' and rang the bell. Somebody, I'm sure, has been slandering me to him; who can it be?

"I didn't say another word, or offer to shake hands, but got up and walked out of the room, as it was no good waiting for the servant to come. When I got into the hall the front door was open, and I heard her voice. I stopped dead short. She was saying something to some people who had been out riding with her. The next moment the door shut, and she tripped in in her riding-habit, and grey gloves, and hat, with the dearest little grey plume in it. She went humming along, and up six or eight steps, without seeing me. Then I moved a step, and she stopped and looked and gave a start. I don't know whether my face was awfully miserable, but, when our eyes met, her's seemed to fill with pity and uneasiness, and inquiry, and the bright look to melt away altogether; and then she blushed and ran down stairs again, and held out her hands, saying, 'I am so glad to

see you, after all this long time.' I pressed it, but I don't think I said anything. I forget; the butler came into the hall, and stood by the door. She paused another moment, looked confused, and then, as the library door opened, went away up stairs, with a kind 'good-bye.' She dropped a little bunch of violets, which she had worn in the breast of her habit, as she went away. I went and picked them up, although your uncle had now come out of the library, and then made the best of my way into the street.

"There, Katie, I have told you everything, exactly as it happend. Do write to me, dear, and tell me, now, what you think. Is it all over? What can I do? Can you do anything for me? I feel it is better in one respect. Her father can never say now that I didn't tell him all about it. But what is to happen? I am so restless. I can settle to nothing, and do nothing, but fish. I moon away all my time by the water-side, dreaming. But I don't mean to let it beat me much longer. Here's the fourth day since I saw her. I came away the next morning. I shall give myself a week; and, dear, do write me a long letter at once, and interpret it all to me. A woman knows so wonderfully what things mean. But don't make it out better than you really think. Nobody can stop my going on loving her, that's a comfort; and while I can do that, and don't know she loves anybody else, I ought to be happier than any other man in the world. Yes, I ought to be, but I ain't. I will be, though; see if I won't. Heigho! Do write directly, my dear counsellor, to your affectionate cousin.

T. B.

"P. S.—I had almost forgotten my usual budget. I enclose my last from India. You will see by it that Harry is getting on famously. I am more glad than I can tell you that my friend East has taken him as his servant. He couldn't be under a better master. Poor Harry! I sometimes think his case is more hopeless than my own. How is it to come right? or mine?"

"ENGLEBOURN.

"DEAR COUSIN,—You will believe how I devoured your letter; though, when I had read the first few lines and saw what was coming, it made me stop and tremble. At first I could have cried over it for vexation; but, now I have thought about it a little, I really do not see any reason to be

discouraged. At any rate, Uncle Robert now knows all about it, and will get used to the idea, and Mary seems to have received you just as you ought to have wished that she should. I am thankful that you have left off pressing me to write to her about you, for I am sure that would not be honorable; and, to reward you, I enclose a letter of hers, which came yesterday. You will see that she speaks with such pleasure of having just caught a glimpse of you that you need not regret the shortness of the interview. You could not expect her to say more, because, after all, she can only guess; and I cannot do more than answer as if I were quite innocent too. I am sure you will be very thankful to me some day for not having been your mouthpiece, as I was so very near being. You need not return the letter. I suppose I am getting more hopeful as I grow older —indeed, I am sure I am; for three or four years ago I should have been in despair about you, and now I am nearly sure that all will come right.

"But, indeed, cousin Tom, you cannot, or ought not to wonder at Uncle Robert's objecting to your opinions. And then I am so surprised to find you saying that you think you may very likely change them. Because, if that is the case, it would be so much better if you would not write and talk about them. Unless you are quite convinced of such things as you write in that dreadful paper, you really ought not to go on writing them so very much as if you believed them.

"And now I am speaking to you about this, which I have often had on my mind to speak to you about, I must ask you not to send me that *Wessex Freeman* any more. I am always delighted to hear what you think; and there is a great deal in the articles you mark for me which seems very fine; and I dare say you quite believe it all when you write it. Only I am afraid lest papa or any one of the servants should open the papers, or get hold of them after I have opened them; for I am sure there are a great many wicked things in the other parts of the paper. So, please do not send it to me, but write and tell me yourself anything that you wish me to know of what you are thinking about and doing. As I did not like to burn the papers, and was afraid to keep them here, I have generally sent them on to your friend Mr. Hardy. He does not know who sends them; and now you might send them yourself straight to him, as I do not know his address in the country. As you are going up again to keep a term, I wish you would talk them over

with him, and see what he thinks about them. You will think this very odd of me, but you know you have always said how much you rely on his judgement, and that you have learnt so much from him. So I am sure you would wish to consult him ; and, if he thinks that you ought to go on writing, it will be a great help to you to know it.

" I am so very glad to be able to tell you how well Martha is getting on. I have always read to her the extracts from the letters from India which you have sent me, and she is very much obliged to you for sending them. I think there is no doubt that she is, and always has been, attached to poor widow Winburn's son, and, now that he is behaving so well, I can see that it gives her great pleasure to hear about him. Only, I hope he will be able to come back before very long, because she is very much admired, and is likely to have so many chances of settling in life, that it is a great chance whether attachment to him will be strong enough to keep her single if he should be absent for many years.

" Do you know I have a sort of superstition, that your fate hangs upon theirs in some curious manner—the two stories have been so interwoven—and that they will both be settled happily much sooner than we dare to hope even just now.

" Don't think, my dear cousin, that this letter is cold, or that I do not take the very deepest interest in all that concerns you. You and Mary are always in my thoughts, and there is nothing in the world I would not do for you both which I thought would help you. I am sure it would do you harm if I were only a go-between. Papa is much as usual. He gets out a good deal in his chair in the sun this fine weather. He desires me to say how glad he should be if you will come over soon and pay us a visit. I hope you will come *very soon.*

" Ever believe me, dear Tom,

" Your affectionate cousin,

" KATIE."

" *November.*

" DEAR TOM,—I hear that what you in England call a mail is to leave camp this evening ; so, that you may have no excuse for not writing to me constantly, I am sitting

down to spin you such a yarn as I can under the disadvantages circumstances in which this will leave me.

"This time last year, or somewhere thereabouts, I was enjoying academic life with you at Oxford; and now here I am, encamped at some unpronounceable place beyond Umbala. You won't be much the wiser for that. What do you know about Umbala? I didn't myself know that there was such a place till a month ago, when we were ordered to march up here. But one lives and learns. Marching over India has its disagreeables, of which dysentery and dust are about the worst. A lot of our fellows are down with the former; amongst others my captain; so I am in command of the company. If it were not for the glorious privilege of grumbling, I think that we should all own that we liked the life. Moving about, though one does get frozen and broiled regularly once in twenty-four hours, suits me; besides, they talk of matters coming to a crisis, and no end of fighting to be done directly. You'll know more about what's going on from the papers than we do, but here they say the ball may begin any day; so we are making forced marches to be up in time. I wonder how I shall like it. Perhaps, in my next, I may tell you how a bullet sounds when it comes at you. If there is any fighting I expect our regiment will make their mark. We are in tip-top order; the colonel is a grand fellow, and the regiment feels his hand down to the youngest drummer boy. What a deal of good I will do when I'm a colonel!

"I duly delivered the enclosure in your last to your convict, who is rapidly ascending the ladder of promotion. I am disgusted at this myself, for I have had to give him up, and there never was such a jewel of a servant; but, of course, it's a great thing for him. He is covering sergeant of my company, and the smartest coverer we have too. I have got a regular broth of a boy, an Irishman, in his place, who leads me a dog of a life. I took him chiefly because he very nearly beat me in a foot-race. Our senior major is a Pat himself, and, it seems, knew something of Larry's powers. So, one day at mess, he offered to back him against any one in the regiment for 200 yards. My captain took him up and named me, and the race came off next day; and a precious narrow thing it was, but I managed to win by a neck for the honor of the old school. He is a lazy scatter-brained creature, utterly indifferent to fact, and I am obliged to keep the brandy flask under lock and key; but

the humor and absolute good-temper of the animal impose upon me, and I really think he is attached to me. So I keep him on, grumbling horribly at the change from that orderly, punctual, clean, accurate convict. Depend upon it, that fellow will do. He makes his way everywhere, with officers and men. He is a gentleman at heart, and, by the way, you would be surprised at the improvement in his manners and speech. There is hardly a taste of Berkshire left in his *deealect*. He has read all the books I could lend him, or borrow for him, and is fast picking up Hindustanee. So you see, after all, I am come round to your opinion that we did a good afternoon's work on that precious stormy common when we carried off the convict from the authorities of his native land, and was first under fire. As you are a performer in that line, couldn't you carry off his sweetheart and send her out here? After the sea voyage there isn't much above 1,000 miles to come by dauk; and tell her, with my compliments, he is well worth coming twice the distance for. Poor fellow, it is a bad lookout for him I'm afraid, as he may not get home this ten years; and, though he isn't a kind to be easily killed, there are serious odds against him, even if he keeps all right. I almost wish you had never told me his story.

"We are going into cantonments as soon as this expedition is over, in a splendid pig district, and I look forward to some real sport. All the men who have had any tell me it beats the best fox hunt all to fits for excitement. I have got my eye on a famous native horse, who is to be had cheap. The brute is in the habit of kneeling on his masters, and tearing them with his teeth when he gets them off, but nothing can touch him while you keep on his back. 'Howsumdever,' as your countrymen say, I shall have a shy at him, if I can get him at my price.

"I've nothing more to say. There's nobody you know here, except the convict sergeant, and it is awfully hard to fill a letter home unless you have somebody to talk about. Yes, by the way, there is one little fellow, an ensign, just joined, who says he remembers us at school. He can't be more than eighteen or nineteen, and was an urchin in the lower school, I suppose, when we were leaving. I don't remember his face, but it's a very good one, and he is a bright gentlemanly youngster as you would wish to see. His name is Jones. Do you remember him? He will be a

godsend to me. I have him to chum with me on this march.

"Keep up your letters as you love me. You at home little know what it is to enjoy a letter. Never mind what you put in it; anything will do from home, and I've nobody much else to write to me.

"There goes the 'assembly.' Why, I can't think, seeing that we have done our day's march. However, I must turn out and see what's up.

* * * * * * *

"*December.*

"I have just fallen on this letter, which I had quite forgotten, or, rather, had fancied I had sent off to you three weeks and more ago. My baggage has just come to hand, and the scrawl turned up in my paper cases. Well, I have plenty to tell you now, at any rate, if I have time to tell it. That 'assembly' which stopped me short sounded in consequence of the arrival of one of the commander-in-chief's aids in our camp with the news that the enemy was over the Sutlej. We were to march at once, with two six-pounders and a squadron of cavalry, on a fort occupied by an outlying lot of them, which commanded a ford, and was to be taken and destroyed, and the rascals who held it dispersed; after which we were to join the main army. Our colonel had the command; so we were on the route within in an hour, leaving a company and the baggage to follow as it could; and from that time to this, forced marching and hard fighting have been the order of the day.

"We drew first blood next morning. The enemy were in some force outside the fort, and showed fight in very rough ground covered with bushes; out of which we had to drive them—which we did after a sharp struggle, and the main body drew off altogether. Then the fort had to be taken. Our two guns worked away at it till dark. In the night two of the gunners, who volunteered for the service, crept close up to the place, and reported that there was nothing to hinder our running right into it. Accordingly the colonel resolved to rush it at daybreak, and my company was told off to lead. The captain being absent, I had to command. I was with the dear old chief the last thing at night, getting his instructions: ten minutes with him before going into action would make a hare fight.

"There was cover to within one hundred and fifty yards of the place; and there I, and poor little Jones, and the men, spent the night in a dry ditch. An hour before daybreak we were on the alert, and served out rations, and then they began playing tricks on one another as if we were out for a junketing. I sat with my watch in my hand, feeling queer, and wondering whether I was a greater coward than the rest. Then came a streak of light. I put up my watch, formed the men; up went a rocket, my signal, and out into the open we went at the double. We hadn't got over a third of the ground when bang went the fort guns, and the grape-shot were whistling about our ears; so I shouted 'Forward!' and away we went as hard as we could go. I was obliged to go ahead, you see, because every man of them knew I had beaten Larry, their best runner, when he had no gun to carry; but I didn't half like it, and should have blessed any hole or bramble which would have sent me over and given them time to catch me. But the ground was provokingly level; and so I was at the first mound and over it several lengths in front of the men, and among a lot of black fellows serving th eguns. They came at me like wild cats, and how I got off is a mystery. I parried a cut from one fellow, and dodged a second; a third rushed at my left side. I just caught the flash of his tulwar, and thought it was all up, when he jumped into the air, shot through the heart by Sergeant Winburn; and the next moment Master Larry rushed by me and plunged his bayonet into my friend in front. It turned me as sick as a dog. I can't fancy anything more disagreeable than seeing the operation for the first time, except being struck oneself. The supporting companies were in in another minute, with the dear old chief himself, who came up and shook hands with me and said I had done credit to the regiment. Then I began to look about, and missed poor little Jones. We found him about twenty yards from the place with two grape-shot through him, stone dead, and smiling like a child asleep. We buried him in the fort. I cut off some of his hair, and sent it home to his mother. Her last letter was in his breast pocket, and a lock of bright brown hair of some one's. I sent them back, too, and his sword.

"Since then we have been with the army, and had three or four general actions; about which I can tell you nothing, except that we have lost about the third of the regiment, and have always been told we have won. Steps go fast

enough; my captain died of wounds and dysentery a week ago; so I have the company in earnest. How long I shall hold it, is another question; for, though there's a slack, we haven't done with sharp work yet, I can see.

"How often we've talked, years ago, of what it must feel like going into battle! Well, the chief thing I felt when the grape came down pretty thick for the first time, as we were advancing, was a sort of gripes in the stomach which made me want to go forward stooping. But I didn't give in to it; the chief was riding close behind us, joking the youngsters who were ducking their heads, and so cheery and cool, that he made old soldiers of us at once. What with smoke, and dust, and excitement, you know scarcely anything of what is going on. The finest sight I have seen is the artillery going into action, Nothing stops those fellows. Places you would crane at out hunting they go right over, guns, carriages, men, and all, leaving any cavalry we've got out here well behind. Do you know what a nullah is? Well, it's a great gap, like a huge dry canal, fifteen or twenty feet deep. We were halted behind one in the last great fight, awaiting the order to advance, when a battery came up at full gallop. We all made sure they must be pulled up the nullah. They never pulled bridle. 'Leading gun, right turn!' sang out the subaltern; and down they went sideways into the nullah. Then, 'Left turn;' up the other bank, one gun after another, the horses scrambling like cats up and down places that my men had to use their hands to scramble up, and away on the other side to within 200 yards of the enemy; and then, round like lightning, and look out in front.

"Altogether, it's sickening work, though there's a grand sort of feeling of carrying your life in your hand. They say the Sepoy regiments have behaved shamefully. There is no sign of anything like funk among our fellows that I have seen. Sergeant Winburn has distinguished himself everywhere. He is like my shadow, and I can see he tries to watch over my precious carcase, and get between me and danger. He would be a deal more missed in the world than I. Except you, old friend, I don't know who would care much if I were knocked over to-morrow. Aunts and cousins are my nearest relations. You know I never was a snuffler; but this sort of life makes one serious, if one has any reverence at all in one. You'll be glad to have this line, if you don't hear from me again. I've often thought in

the last month that we shall never see one another again in this world. But, whether in this world or any other, you know I am and always shall be your affectionate friend,

"H. EAST."

CAMP OF THE SUTLEJ,

January.

"DEAR MASTER TOM,—The captain's last words was, if anything happened I was to be sure to write and tell you. And so I take up my pen, though you will know as I am not used to writing, to tell you the misfortune as has happened to our regiment. Because, if you was to ask any man in our regiment, let it be who it would, he would say as the captain was the best officer as ever led men. Not but what there's a many of them as will go to the front as brave as lions, and don't value shot no more than if it was rotten apples; and men as is men will go after such. But 'tis the captain's manners and ways, with a kind word for any poor fellow as is hurt, or sick and tired, and making no account of hisself, and, as you may say, no bounce with him; that's what makes the difference.

"As it might be last Saturday, we came upon the enemy where he was posted very strong, with guns all along his front, and served till we got right up to them, the gunners being cut down and bayoneted when we got right up amongst them, and no quarter given; and there was great banks of earth, too, to clamber over, and more guns behind; so, with the marching up in front and losing so many officers and men, our regiment was that wild when we got among them, that 'twas awful to see, and, if there was any prisoners taken, it was more by mistake than not.

"Me and three or four more settled, when the word came to prepare for action, to keep with the captain, because 'twas known to every one as no odds would stop him, and he would never mind hisself. The dust and smoke and noise was that thick you couldn't see nor hear anything after our regiment was in action; but, so far as I seen, when we was wheeled into line and got the word to advance, there was as it might be as far as from our old cottage to the Hawk's Lynch to go over before we got to the guns which was playing into us all the way. Our line went up very steady, only where men was knocked down; and, when we

came to within a matter of sixty yards, the officers jumped out and waved their swords, for 'twas no use to give words, and the ranks was broken by reason of the running up to take the guns from the enemy. Me and the rest went after the captain; but he, being so light of foot, was first by may be ten yards or so, at the mound, and so up before we was by him. But, though they was all round him like bees when we got to him, 'twas not then as he was hit. There was more guns further on, and we and they drove on all together; and, though they was beaten, being fine tall men and desperate, there was many of them fighting hard, and, as you might say, a man scarcely knowed how he got hit. I kept to the captain as close as ever I could, but there was times when I had to mind myself. Just as we came to the last gun's, Larry, that's the captain's servant, was trying by hisself to turn one of them round, so as to fire on the enemy as they took the river to the back of their lines all in a huddle. So I turned to lend him a hand; and, when I looked round next moment, there was the captain a staggering like a drunken man, and he so strong and lissom up to then, and never had a scratch since the war begun, and this the last minute of it pretty nigh, for the enemy was all cut to pieces and drowned that day. I got to him before he fell, and we laid him down gently, and did the best we could for him. But he was bleeding dreadful with a great gash in his side, and his arm broke, and two gunshot wounds. Our surgeon was killed, and 'twas hours before his wounds was dressed, and 'twill be God's mercy if ever he gets round; though they do say if the fever and dysentery keeps off, and he can get out of this country and home, there's no knowing but that he may get the better of it all, but not to serve with the regiment again for years to come.

"I hope, Master Tom, as I've told you all the captain would like as you should know; only, being not much used to writing, I hope you will excuse mistakes. And, if so be that it won't be too much troubling of you, and the captain should go home, and you could write to say as things was going on at home as before, which the captain always gave to me to read when the mail come in, it would be a great help towards keeping up a good heart and in a foreign land, which is hard at times to do. There is some things which I make bold to send by a comrade going home sick. I don't know as they will seem much, but I hope as you will accept of the sword, which belonged to one of her officers, and the

rest to her. Also, on account of what was in the last piece as you forwarded, I send a letter to go along with the things, if Miss Winter, who have been so kind, or you would deliver the same. To whom I make bold to send my respects as well as to yourself, and hoping this will find you well and all friends, and

"From your respectful,

"HENRY WINBURN,
"Color-sergeant, 101st Regiment.

"*March.*

"MY DEAR TOM,—I begin to think I may see you again yet, but it has been a near shave. I hope Sergeant Winburn's letter, and the returns, in which I see I was put down "dangerously wounded," will not have frightened you very much. The war is over; and, if I live to get down to Calcutta you will see me in the summer, please God. The end was like the beginning—going right up to the guns. Our regiment is frightfully cut up; there are only 300 men left under arms—the rest dead or in hospital. I am sick at heart at it, and weak in body, and can only write a few lines at a time, but will get on with this as I can, in time for next mail.

* * * * *

"Since beginning this letter I have had another relapse. So, in case I should never finish it, I will say at once what I most want to say. Winburn has saved my life more than once, and is besides one of the noblest and bravest fellows in the world; so I mean to provide for him in case anything should happen to me. I have made a will, and appointed you my executor, and left him a legacy. You must buy his discharge, and get him home and married to the Englebourn beauty as soon as possible. But what I want you to understand is, that if the legacy isn't enough to do this, and make all straight with her old curmudgeon of a father, it is my first wish that whatever will do it should be made up to him. He has been in hospital with a bad flesh wound, and has let out to me the whole of his story, of which you had only given me the heads. If that young women does not wait for him, and book him, I shall give up all faith in petticoats. Now that's done I feel more at ease.

"Let me see. I haven't written for six weeks and more,

just before our last great fight. You'll know all about it from the papers long before you get this—a bloody business—I am loath to think of it. I was knocked over in the last of their entrenchments, and should then and there have bled to death had it not been for Winburn. He never left me, though the killing, and plundering, and roystering afterwards, was going on all around, and strong temptation to a fellow when his blood is up, and he sees his comrades at it, after such work as we have had. What's more he caught my Irish fellow and made him stay by me too, and between them they managed to prop me up and stop the bleeding, though it was touch and go. I never thought they would manage it. You can't think what a curious feeling it is, the life going out of you. I was perfectly conscious, and knew all they were doing and saying, and thought quite clearly, though in a sort of dreamy way, about you, and a whole jumble of people and things at home. It was the most curious painless mixture of dream and life, getting more dreamy every minute. I don't suppose I could have opened my eyes or spoken; at any rate I had no wish to do so, and didn't try. Several times the thought of death came close to me; and, whether it was the odd state I was in, or what else I don't know, but the only feeling I had, was one of intense curiosity. I should think I must have lain there, with Winburn supporting my head, and moistening my lips with rum-and-water, for four or five hours, before a doctor could be got. He had managed to drive Larry about till he had found, or borrowed, or stolen the drink, and then kept him making short cruises in search of help in the shape of hospital-staff, ambulances, or doctors, from which Master Larry always came back without the slightest success. My belief is, he employed those precious minutes, when he was from under his sergeant's eye, in looting. At last, Winburn got impatient, and I heard him telling Larry what he was to do while he was gone himself to find a doctor; and then I was moved as gently as if I had been a sick girl. I heard him go off with a limp, but did not know till long after of his wound.

"Larry had made such a wailing and to-do when the first found me, that a natural reaction now set in, and he began gently and tenderly to run over in his mind what could be made out of 'the captin,' and what would become of his things. I found out this, partly through his habit of talking to himself, and partly from the precaution which he

took of ascertaining where my watch and purse were, and what else I had upon me. It tickled me immensely to hear him. Presently I found he was examining my boots, which he pronounced 'iligant entirely,' and wondered whether he could get them on. The 'serjint' would never want them. And he then proceeded to assert, while he actually began unlacing them, that the 'captin' would never have '*bet him*' but for the boots, which 'was worth ten feet in a furlong to any man.' 'Sure 'tis too late now; but wouldn't I like to run him agin with bare feet?' I couldn't stand that, and just opened my eyes a little, and moved my hand, and said, 'Done.' I wanted to add, 'you rascal,' but that was too much for me. Larry's face of horror which I just caught through my half-opened eyes, would have made me roar, if I had had strength for it. I believe the resolution I made that he should never go about in my boots helped to pull me through; but, as soon as Winburn came back with the doctor, Master Larry departed, and I much doubt whether I shall ever set eyes on him again in the flesh. Not if he can help it, certainly. The regiment, what's left of it, is away in the Punjaub, and he with it. Winburn, as I told you, is hard hit, but no danger. I have great hopes that he will be invalided. You may depend upon it he will escort me home, if any interest of mine can manage it; and the dear old chief is so kind to me that I think he will arrange it somehow.

"I must be wonderfully better to have spun such a yarn. Writing those first ten lines nearly finished me, a week ago, and now I am scarcely tired after all this scrawl. If that rascal, Larry, escapes hanging another year, and comes back home, I will run him yet, and thrash his head off.

"There is something marvelously life-giving in the idea of sailing for old England again; and I mean to make a strong fight for seeing you again, old boy. God bless you. Write again for the chance, directing to my agents at Calcutta, as before. Ever your half-alive, but whole-hearted and affectionate friend, "H. EAST."

CHAPTER XLV.

MASTER'S TERM.

ONE more look into the old college where we have spent so much time already, not, I hope, altogether unpleasantly. Our hero is up in the summer term, keeping his three weeks' residence, the necessary preliminary to an M. A. degree. We find him sitting in Hardy's rooms; tea is over, scouts out of college, candles lighted, and silence reigning, except when distant sounds of mirth come from some undergraduates' rooms on the opposite side of quad, through the open windows.

Hardy is deep in the budget of Indian letters, some of which we have read in the last chapter; and Tom reads them over again as his friend finishes them, and then carefully folds them up and puts them back in their places in a large pocket-case. Except an occasional explanatory remark, or exclamation of interest, no word passes until Hardy finishes the last letter. Then he breaks out into praises of the two Harrys, which gladdens Tom's heart as he fastens the case, and puts it back in his pocket, saying, "Yes, you won't find two finer fellows in a long summer's day; no, nor in twenty."

"And you expect them home, then, in a week or two?"

"Yes, I think so. Just about the time I shall be going down."

"Don't talk about going down. You haven't been here a week."

"Just a week. One of three. Three weeks wasted in keeping one's Master's term! Why can't you give a fellow his degree quietly, without making him come and kick his heels here for three weeks?"

"You ungrateful dog! Do you mean to say you haven't enjoyed coming back, and sitting in dignity in the bachelors' seats in chapel, and at the bachelors' table in hall, and thinking how much wiser you are than the undergraduates? Besides, your old friends want to see you, and you ought to want to see them."

"Well, I am very glad to see something of you again, old fellow. I don't find that a year's absence has made any change in you. But who else is there that I care to see? My old friends are gone, and the year has made a great

gap between me and the youngsters. They look on me as a sort of don."

"Of course they do. Why, you are a sort of don. You will be an M. A. in a fortnight, and a member of Convocation."

"Very likely; but I don't appreciate the dignity. I can tell you being up here now is anything but enjoyable. You have never broken with the place. And then, you always did you duty, and have done the college credit. You can't enter into the feelings of a fellow whose connexion with Oxford has been quite broken off, and who wasted three parts of his time here, when he comes back to keep his Master's.

"Come, come, Tom. You might have read more certainly, with benefit to yourself and college, and taken a higher degree. But, after all, didn't the place do you a great deal of good? and you didn't do it much harm. I don't like to see you in this sort of gloomy state; it isn't natural to you."

"It is becoming natural. You haven't seen much of me during the last year, or you would have remarked it. And then, as I tell you, Oxford, when one has nothing to do in it but to moon about, thinking over one's past follies and sins, isn't cheerful. It never was a very cheerful place to me at the best of times."

"Not even at pulling times?"

"Well, the river is the part I like best to think of. But even the river makes me rather melancholy now. One feels one has done with it."

"Why, Tom, I believe your melancholy comes from their not having asked you to pull in the boat."

"Perhaps it does. Don't you call it degrading to be pulling in the torpid in one's old age?"

"Mortified vanity, man! They have a capital boat. I wonder how we should have liked to have been turned out for some bachelor just because he had pulled a good oar in his day?"

"Not at all. I don't blame the young ones, and I hope to do my duty in the torpid. By the way, they are an uncommonly nice set of youngsters. Much better behaved in every way than we were, unless it is that they put on their best manners before me."

"No, I don't think they do. The fact is they are really fine young fellows."

"So I think. And I'll tell you what, Jack; since we are sitting and talking our minds to one another at last, like old times, somebody has made the most wondeful change in this college. I rather think it is seeing what St. Ambrose's is now, and thinking what it was in my time, and what an uncommon member of society I should have turned out if I had had the luck to have been here now instead of then, that makes me down in the mouth—more even than having to pull in the torpid instead of the racing boat."

"You do think it is improved, then?"

"Think! Why it is a different place altogether; and, as you are the only new tutor, it must have been your doing. Now, I want to know your secret."

"I've no secret, except taking a real interest in all that the men do, and living with them as much as I can. You may fancy it isn't much of a trial to me to steer the boat down, or run on the bank and coach the crew."

"Ah! I remember; you were beginning that before I left, in your first year. I knew that would answer."

"Yes. The fact is, I find that just what I like best is the very best thing for the men. With very few exceptions they are all glad to be stirred up, and meet me nearly half way in reading, and three-quarters in everything else. I believe they would make me captain to-morrow."

"And why don't you let them?"

"No; there's a time for everything. I go in in the scratch fours for the pewters, and—more by token—my crew won them two years running. Look at my trophies," and he pointed to two pewter pots, engraved with the college arms, which stood on his side-board.

"Well, I dare say you're right. But what does the president say?"

"Oh, he is a convert. Didn't you see him on the bank when you torpids made your bump the other night?"

"No, you don't mean it? Well, do you know, a sort of vision of black tights, and a broad-brimmed hat, crossed me, but I never gave it a second thought. And so the president comes out to see the St. Ambrose boat row?"

"Seldom misses two nights running."

"Then, 'carry me out, and bury me decently.' Have you seen old Tom walking around Peckwater lately on his clapper, smoking a cigar with the Dean of Christchurch? Don't be afraid. I am ready for anything you like to tell

me. Draw any amount you like on my faith; I shall honor the draft after that."

"The president isn't a bad judge of an oar, when he sets his mind to it."

"Isn't he? But, I say, Jack—no sell—how in the world did it happen?"

"I believe it happened chiefly through his talks with me. When I was first made tutor he sent for me and told me he had heard I encouraged the young men in boating, and he most positively forbid it. I didn't care much about staying up; so I was pretty plain with him, and said, 'if I was not allowed to take the line I thought best in such matters I must resign at the end of the term.' He assented, but afterwards thought better of it, and sent for me again, and we had several encounters. I took my ground very civilly but firmly, and he had to give up one objection after another. I think the turning-point was when he quoted St. Paul on me, and said I was teaching boys to worship physical strength, instead of teaching them to keep under their bodies and bring them into subjection. Of course I countered him there with tremendous effect. The old boy took it very well, only saying he feared it was no use to argue further—in this matter of boat-racing he had come to a conclusion, not without serious thought, many years before. However, he came round quietly. And so he has on other points. In fact, he is a wonderfully open-minded man for his age, if you only put things to him the right way."

"Has he come round about gentlemen-commoners? I see you have only two or three up."

"Yes. We haven't given up taking them altogether. I hope that may come soon. But I and another tutor took to plucking them ruthlessly at matriculation, unless they were quite up to the commoner standard. The consequence was, a row in common room. We stood out, and won. Luckily, as you know, it has always been given out here that all under-graduates, gentlemen-commoners and commoners, have to pass the same college examinations, and to attend the same course of lectures. You know also what a mere sham and pretence the rule had become. Well, we simply made a reality of it, and in answer to all objections said, 'Is it our rule or not? If it is, we are bound to act on it. If you want to alter it, there are the regular ways of doing so.' After a little grumbling they let us have our way, and the consequence is, that velvet is getting scarce at St. Ambrose."

"What a blessing! What other miracles have you bee performing?"

"The best reform we have carried is throwing the kitche and cellar open to the undergraduates."

"W-h-e-w! That's just the sort of reform we shoul have appreciated. Fancy Drysdale's lot with the key the college cellars, at about ten o'clock on a shiny night."

"You don't quite understand the reform. You remem ber, when you were an undergraduate you couldn't give dinner in college, and you had to buy your wine an where?"

"Yes. And awful firewater we used to get. The go ernor supplied me, like a wise man."

"Well, we have placed the college in the relation benevolent father. Every undergraduate now can giv two dinners a term in his own rooms, from the kitchen; more, if he comes and asks, and has any reason to giv We take care that they have a good dinner at a reasonab rate, and the men are delighted with the arrangement. don't believe there are three men in the college now wh have hotel bills. And we let them have all their wine o of the college cellars."

"That's what I call good common sense. Of course must answer in every way. And you find they all come you?"

"Almost all. They can't get anything like the wine w give them at the price, and they know it."

"Do you make them pay ready money?"

"The dinners and wine are charged in their battel bil so they have to pay once a term, just as they do for th orders at commons."

"It must swell their battel bills awfully."

"Yes, but battel bills always come in at the beginning term, when they are flush of money. Besides, they know that battel bills must be paid. In a small way it the best thing that ever was done for St. Ambrose's. Y see it cuts so many ways. Keeps men in the college, knoc off the most objectionable bills at inns and pastry-cook keeps them from being poisoned, makes them pay th bills regularly, shows them that we like them to be able live like gentlemen—"

"And lets you dons know what they are all about, a how much they spend in the way of entertaining."

"Yes; and a very good thing for them too. They kn

hat we shall not interfere while they behave like gentlemen."

"Oh, I'm not objecting. And was this your doing, too?"

"No; a joint business. We hatched in the common oom, and then the bursar spoke to the president, who was urious, and said we were giving the sanction of the college o disgraceful luxury and extravagance. Luckily he had ot the power of stopping us, and now is convinced."

"The goddess of common sense seems to have alighted gain in the quad of St. Ambrose. You'll never leave the lace, Jack, now you're beginning to get everything your wn way."

"On the contrary, I don't mean to stop up more than another year at the outside. I have been tutor nearly three ears now; that's about long enough."

"Do you think you're right? You seem to have hit on our line in life wonderfully. You like the work, and the ork likes you. You are doing a heap of good up here. ou'll be president in a year or two, depend on it. I should ay you had better stick to Oxford."

"No. I should be of no use in a year or two. We ant a constant current of fresh blood here."

"In a general way. But you don't get a man every day ho can throw himself into the men's pursuits, and can get old of them in the right way. And then, after all, when fellow has got such work cut out for him as you have, Oxord must be an uncommonly pleasant place to live in."

"Pleasant enough in many ways. But you seem to have orgotten how you used to rail against it."

"Yes. Because I never hit off the right ways of the lace. But, if I had taken a first and got a fellowship, I ould like it well enough, I dare say."

"Being a fellow, on the contrary, makes it worse. While e was an undergraduate one could feel virtuous and indigant at the vices of Oxford, at least at those which one did ot indulge in, particularly at the flunkeyism and money-orship which are our most prevalent and disgraceful sins. ut when one is a fellow it is quite another affair. They ecome a sore burthen then, enough to break one's heart."

"Why, Jack, we're changing characters to night. Fancy our coming out in the abusive line! Why, I never said arder things of Alma Mater myself. However, there's enty of flunkeyism and money-worship everywhere else."

"Yes; but it is not so heart-breaking in other places.

When one thinks what a great centre of learning and faith Oxford ought to be like—that its highest educational work should just be the deliverance of us all from flunkeyism and money-worship—and then looks at matters here without rose-colored spectacles, it gives one sometimes a sort of chilly despondency, which is very hard to struggle against."

"I am sorry to hear you talk like that, Jack, for one can't help loving the place after all."

"So I do, God knows. If I didn't I shouldn't care for its shortcomings."

"Well, the flunkeyism and money-worship were bad enough, but I don't think they were the worst things—at least not in my day. Our neglects were almost worse than our worships."

"You mean the want of all reverence for parents? Well, perhaps that lies at the root of the false worships. They spring up on the vacant soil."

"And the want of reverence for women, Jack. The worst of all, to my mind!"

"Perhaps you are right. But we are not at the bottom yet."

"How do you mean?"

"I mean that we must worship God before we can reverence parents or women, or root out flunkeyism and money worship."

"Yes. But after all can we fairly lay that sin on Oxford? Surely, whatever may be growing up side by side with it there's more Christianity here than almost anywhere else."

"Plenty of common-room Christianity—belief in a dead God. There, I have never said it to any one but you, but that is the slough we have to get out of. Don't think that I despair for us. We shall do it yet; but it will be sore work, stripping off the comfortable wine-party religion in which we are wrapped up—work for our strongest and our wisest."

"And yet you think of leaving?"

"There are other reasons. I will tell you some day. But now, to turn to other matters, how have you been getting on this last year? You write so seldom that I am quite behind-hand."

"Oh, much the same as usual."

"Then you are still like one of those who went out to David?"

"No, I'm not in debt."

"But discontented?"

"Pretty much like you there, Jack. However, content is no virtue, that I can see, while there's anything to mend. Who is going to be contented with game-preserving, and corn-laws, and grinding the faces of the poor? David's camp was a better place than Saul's, any day."

Hardy got up, opened a drawer, and took out a bundle of papers, which Tom recognised as the *Wessex Freeman*. He felt rather uncomfortable, as his friend seated himself again, and began looking them over.

"You see what I have here," he said.

Tom nodded.

"Well, there are some of the articles I should like to ask you about, if you don't object."

"No; go on."

"Here is one, then, to begin with. I won't read it all. Let me see; here is what I was looking for," and he began reading: "One would think, to hear these landlords, our rulers, talk, that the glorious green fields, the deep woods, the everlasting hills, and the rivers that run among them, were made for the sole purpose of ministering to their greedy lusts and mean ambitions; that they may roll out amongst unrealities their pitiful mock lives, from their silk and lace cradles to their spangled coffins, studded with silver knobs, and lying coats of arms, reaping where they have not sown, and gathering where they have not strewed; making the omer small and the ephah great, that they may sell the refuse of the wheat——'"

"That'll do, Jack; but what's the date of that paper?"

"July last. Is it yours, then?"

"Yes. And I allow it's too strong and one-sided. I have given up writing altogether; will that satisfy you? I don't see my own way clear enough yet. But for all that I'm not ashamed of what I wrote in that paper."

"I have nothing more to say after that, except that I'm heartily glad you have given up writing for the present."

"But I say, old fellow, how did you get these papers, and know about my articles?"

"They were sent me. Shall I burn them now, or would you like to have them? We needn't say anything more about them."

"Burn them by all means. I suppose a friend sent them to you?"

"I suppose so." Hardy went on burning the papers in

silence ; and as Tom watched him, a sudden light seemed to break upon him.

"I say, Jack," he said presently, "a little bird has been whispering something to me about that friend." Hardy winched a little, and redoubled his diligence in burning the papers. Tom looked on smiling, and thinking how to go on now that he had so unexpectedly turned the tables on his monitor, when the clock struck twelve.

"Hullo!" he said, getting up ; "time for me to knock out, or old Copas will be in bed. To go back to where we started from to-night—as soon as East and Harry Winburn get back we shall have some jolly doings at Englebourn. There'll be a wedding, I hope, and you'll come over and do parson for us, won't you?"

"You mean for Patty? Of course I will."

"The little bird whispered to me that you wouldn't dislike visiting that part of the old county. Good night, Jack. I wish you success, old fellow, with all my heart, and I hope after all that you may leave St. Ambrose's within the year."

CHAPTER XLVI.

FROM INDIA TO ENGLEBOURN

If a knowledge of contemporary history must be reckoned as an important element in the civilization of any people, then I am afraid that the good folk of Englebourn must have been content, in the days of our story, with a very low place on the ladder. How, indeed, was knowledge to percolate, so as to reach down to the foundations of Englebournian society—the stratum on which all others rest—the common agricultural labourer, producer of corn and other grain, the careful and stolid nurse and guardian of youthful oxen, sheep, and pigs, many of them far better fed and housed than his own children? All-penetrating as she is, one cannot help wondering that she did not give up Englebourn altogether as a hopeless job.

So far as written periodical instruction is concerned (with the exception of the *Quarterly*, which Dr. Winter had taken in from its commencement, but rarely opened), the supply was limited to at most half a dozen weekly papers.

A London journal, sound in Church and State principles, most respectable but not otherwise than heavy, came every Saturday to the rectory. The Conservative county paper was taken in at the Red Lion ; and David the constable, and the blacksmith, clubbed together to purchase the Liberal paper, by help of which they managed to wage unequal war with the knot of village quidnuncs, who assembled almost nightly at the bar of the Tory beast above referred to—that king of beasts, red indeed in color, but of the truest blue in political principle. Besides these, perhaps three or four more papers were taken by the farmers. But, scanty as the food was, it was quite enough for the mouths; indeed, when the papers once passed out of the parlours they had for the most part performed their mission. Few of the farm-servants, male or female, had curiosity or scholarship enough to spell through the dreary columns.

And oral teaching was not much more plentiful, as how was it likely to be ? Englebourn was situated on no trunk road, and the amount of intercourse between it and the rest of the world was of the most limited kind. The rector never left home ; the curate at rare intervals. Most of the farmers went to market once a week, and dined at their ordinary, discussing county politics according to their manner, but bringing home little, except as much food and drink as they could cleverly carry. The carrier went to and from Newbury once a week ; but he was a silent man, chiefly bent on collecting and selling butter. The postman, who was deaf, only went as far as the next village. The waggoners drove their masters' produce to market from time to time, and boozed away an hour or two in the kitchen, or tap, or skittle-alley, of some public-house in the nearest town, while their horses rested. With the above exceptions, probably not one of the villagers strayed ten miles from home, from year's end to year's end. As to visitors, an occasional pedlar or small commercial traveller turned up about once a quarter. A few boys and girls, more enterprising than their fellows, went out altogether into the world of their own accord, in the course of the year; and an occasional burly ploughboy, or carter's boy, was entrapped into taking the Queen's shilling by some subtle recruiting sergeant. But few of these were seen again, except at long intervals. The yearly village feasts, harvest homes, or a meet of the hounds on Englebourn common, were the most exciting events which in an ordin-

ary way stirred the surface of Englebourn life ; only faintest and most distant murmurs of the din and strife of the great outer world, of wars, and rumors of wars, the fall of governments and the throes of nations, reached that primitive, out-of-the-way little village.

A change was already showing itself since Miss Winter had been old enough to look after the schools. The waters were beginning to stir ; and by this time no doubt, the parish boasts a regular book-hawker and reading-room; but at that day Englebourn was like one of those small ponds you may find in some nook of a hill-side, the banks grown over with underwood, to which neither man nor beast, scarcely the winds of heaven, have any access. When you have found such a pond you may create a great excitement amongst the easy-going newts and frogs who inhabit it, by throwing in a pebble. The splash in itself is a small splash enough, and the waves which circle away from it are very tiny waves, but they move over the whole face of the pond and are of more interest to the frogs than a nor'-wester in the Atlantic

So the approaching return of Harry Winburn, and the story of his doings at the wars, and of the wonderful things he had sent home, stirred Englebourn to its depth. In that small corner of the earth the sergeant was of far more importance than governor-general and commander-in-chief. In fact, it was probably the common belief that he was somehow the head of the whole business; and India, the war, and all that hung thereon, were looked at and cared for only as they had served to bring him out. So careless were the good folk about everything in the matter except their own hero, and so wonderful were the romances which soon got abroad about him, that Miss Winter, tired of explaining again and again to the old women without the slightest effect on the parochial faith, bethought her of having a lecture on the subject of India and the war in the parish schoolroom.

Full of this idea she wrote off to Tom, who was the medium of communication on Indian matters, and propounded it to him. The difficulty was, that Mr. Walker, the curate, the only person competent to give it, was going away directly for a three weeks' holiday, having arranged with two neighboring curates to take his Sunday duty for him. What was to be done? Harry might be back any

day, it seemed; so there was no time to be lost. Could Tom come himself, and help her?

Tom could not; but he wrote back to say that his friend Hardy was just getting away from Oxford for the long vacation, and would gladly take Mr. Walker's duty for the three weeks, if Dr. Winter approved, on his way home; by which arrangement Englebourn would not be without an efficient parson on week-days, and she would have the man of all others to help her in utilizing the sergeant's history for the instruction of the bucolic mind. The arrangement, moreover, would be particulary happy, because Hardy had already promised to perform the marriage ceremony, which Tom and she had settled would take place at the earliest possible moment after the return of the Indian heroes.

Dr. Winter was very glad to accept the offer; and so, when they parted at Oxford, Hardy went to Englebourn, where we must leave him for the present. Tom went home—whence, in a few days, he had to hurry down to Southampton to meet the two Harrys. He was much shocked at first to see the state of his old school-fellow. East looked haggard and pale in the face, notwithstanding the sea voyage. His clothes hung on him as if they had been made for a man of twice his size, and he walked with difficulty by the help of a large stick. But he had lost none of his indomitableness, laughed at Tom's long face, and declared that he felt himself getting better and stronger every day.

"If you had only seen me at Calcutta," he said, "you would sing a different song. Eh, Winburn?"

Harry Winburn was much changed, and had acquired all the composed and self-reliant look which is so remarkable in a good non-commissioned officer. Readiness to obey and command was stamped on every line of his face; but it required all his powers of self-restraint to keep within bounds his delight at getting home again. His wound was quite healed, and his health re-established by the voyage; and, when Tom saw how wonderfully his manners and carriage were improved, and how easily his uniform sat on him, he felt quite sure that all would soon be right at Englebourn, and that Katie and he would be justified in their prophecies and preparations. The invalids had to report themselves in London, and thither the three proceeded together. When this was done, Harry Winburn was sent

off at once. He resisted at first, and begged to be allowed to stay with his captain until the captain could go into Berkshire himself. But he was by this time too much accustomed to discipline not to obey a positive order, and was comforted by Tom's assurance that he would not leave East, and would do everything for him which the sergeant had been accustomed to do.

Three days later, as East and Tom were sitting at breakfast, a short note came from Miss Winter, telling of Harry's arrival—how the bells were set ringing to welcome him; how Mr. Hardy had preached the most wonderful sermon on his story the next day; above all, how Patty had surrendered at discretion, and the bans had been called for the first time. So the sooner they would come down the better—as it was very important that no time should be lost, lest some of the old jealousies and quarrels should break out again. Upon reading and considering which letter, East resolved to start for Englebourn at once, and Tom to accompany him.

There was one person to whom Harry's return and approaching wedding was a subject of unmixed joy and triumph, and that was David the constable. He had always been a sincere friend to Harry, and had stood up for him when all the parish respectabilities had turned against him, and had prophesied that he would live to be a credit to the place. So now David felt himself an inch higher as he saw Harry walking about in his uniform with his sweetheart, the admiration of all Englebourn. But, besides all the unselfish pleasure which David enjoyed on his young friend's account, a little piece of private and personal gratification came to him on his own. Ever since Harry's courtship had begun David had felt himself in a false position towards, and had suffered under, old Simon, the rector's gardener. The necessity for keeping the old man in good humor for Harry's sake had always been present to the constable's mind; and for the privilege of putting in a good word for his favorite now and then, he had allowed old Simon to assume an air of superiority over him, and to trample upon him and dogmatize to him, even in the matters of flowers and bees. This had been the more galling to David on account of old Simon's intolerant Toryism, which the constable's soul rebelled against, except in the matter of Church music. On this point they agreed, but even here Simon managed to be unpleasant. He would lay the whole blame

of the changes which had been effected upon David, accusing him of having given in where there was no need. As there was nothing but a wall between the Rectory garden and David's little strip of ground, in which he spent all his leisure time until the shades of evening summoned him to the bar of the Red Lion for his daily pint and pipe, the two were constantly within hearing of one another, and Simon, in times past, had seldom neglected an opportunity of making himself disagreeable to his long suffering neighbour.

But now David was a free man again; and he took the earliest occasion of making the change in his manner apparent to Simon, and of getting, as he called it, "upsides" with him. One would have thought, to look at him, that the old gardener was as pachydermatous as a rhinoceros; but somehow he seemed to feel that things had changed between them, and did not appreciate an interview with David now nearly so much as of old. So he found very little to do in that part of the garden which abutted on the constable's premises. When he could not help working there, he chose the times at which David was most likely to be engaged, or even took the trouble to ascertain that he was not at home.

Early on midsummer-day, old Simon reared his ladder against the boundary wall, with a view of "doctorin'" some of the fruit trees, relying on a parish meeting, at which the constable's presence was required. But he had not more than half finished his operations before David returned from vestry, and, catching sight of the top of the ladder and Simon's head above the wall, laid aside all other business, and descended into the garden.

Simon kept on at his work, only replying by a jerk of the head and one of his grunts to his neighbour's salutation.

David took his coat off, and his pruning knife out, and, establishing himself within easy shot of his old oppressor, opened fire at once—

"Thou'st gi'en thy consent then?"

"'Tis no odds, consent or none—her's old enough to hev her own waay."

"But thou'st gi'en thy consent?"

"Ees, then, if thou wilt hev't," said Simon, surily;" "wut then?"

"So I heerd," said David, indulging in an audible chuckle.

"What bist a laughin' at?"

"I be laughin' to think how folks changes. Do'st mind the hard things as thou hast judged and said o' Harry? Not as ever I known thy judgment to be o' much account, 'cept about roots. But thou saidst, times and times, as a would come to the gallows."

"So a med yet—so a med yet," answered Simon. "Not but wut I wishes well to un, and bears no grudges; but others as hev got the law ov un medn't."

"'Tis he as hev got grudges to bear. He don't need none o' thy forgiveness."

"Pr'aps a med't. But hev 'em got the law ov un, or hevn't em?"

"Wut do'st mean: got the law ov un?"

"Thaay warrants as wur out agen un, along wi' the rest as was transpworted auver Farmer Tester's job."

"Oh, he've got no call to be afeard o' thaay now. Thou know'st I hears how 'tis laid down in Sessions and 'Sizes, wher' I've been this twenty year."

"Like enuff. Only, wut's to hinder thaay tryin' ov un, if thaay be a minded to 't? That's wut I wants to know."

"'Tis wut the counsellors calls the Statut o' Lamentations, said the constable, proudly.

"Wutever's Lamentations got to wi't?"

"A gurt deal, I tell 'ee. What do'st thou know 'Lamentations?"

"Lamentations cums afore Ezekiel in the Bible."

"That ain't no kin to the Statut o' Lamentations. But ther's summut like to't in the Bible," said the constable, stopping his work to consider a moment. "Do'st mind the year when the land wur all to be guv back to thaay as owned it fust, and debts wur to be wiped out?"

"Ees, I minds summut o' that."

"Well, this here statut says, if so be as a man hev bin to the wars, and sarved his country like, as nothin' shan't be reckoned agen he, let alone murder. Nothin' can't do away wi' murder."

"No, nor oughtn't. Hows'mdever, you seems clear about the law on't. There's Miss a callin'."

And old Simon's head disappeared as he descended the ladder to answer the summons of his young mistress, not displeased at having his fears as to the safety of his future son-in-law set at rest by so eminent a legal authority as the constable. Fortunately for Harry, the constable's law was not destined to be tried. Young Wurley was away in

London. Old Tester was bedridden with an accumulation of diseases brought on by his bad life. His illness made him more violent and tyrannical than ever; but he could do little harm out of his own room, for no one ever went to see him, and the wretched farm-servant who attended him was much too frightened to tell him anything of what was going on in the parish. There was no one else to revive proceedings against Harry.

David pottered on at his bees and his flowers till old Simon returned, and ascended his ladder again.

"You be ther' still, be 'ee?" he said, as soon as he saw David.

"Ees. Any news?"

"Ah, news enuff. He as wur Harry's captain and young Mr. Brown be comin' down to-morrow, and hev tuk all the Red Lion to theirselves. And thaay beant content to wait for banns—not thaay—and so ther's to be a license got for Saturday. 'Taint scarce decent, that 'taint."

"'Tis best to get drough wi't," said the constable.

"Then nothin'll save 'em but the church must be hung wi' flowers, and wher' be thaay to cum from without strippin' and starvin' ov my beds? 'Tis shameful to see how folks acts wi' flowers now-a-days, a cuttin' on 'em and puttin' en 'em about, as prodigal at though thaay growed o' theirselves."

"So 'tis shameful," said David, whose sympathies for flowers were all with Simon. "I heers tell as young Squire Wurley hevs 'em on table at dinner-time instead o' the wittels."

"Do'ee though! I calls it reg'lar Papistry, and so I tells Miss; but her only laughs."

The constable shook his head solemnly as he replied "Her've been led away wi' such doin's ever sence Mr. Walker cum, and took to organ-playin' and chantin'."

"And he ain't no sich gurt things in the pulpit, neether, ain't Mr. Walker," chimed in Simon, (the two had not been so in harmony for years). "I reckon as he ain't nothin' to speak ov alongside o' this here new un as hev tuk his place. He've a got a good deal o' move in un' he hev."

"Ah, so a hev. A wunnerful sight o' things a telled us t'other night, about the Indians and the wars."

"Ah! talking cums as nat'ral to he as buttermilk to a litterin' sow."

"Thou should'st a heerd un, though, about the battles. I can't mind the neames on 'em—let me see—"

"I dwun't valley the neames," interrupted Simon. "Thaay makes a deal o' fuss auvert't aal, but I dwun't tek no account on't. Tain't like the owld wars and fightin' 'o the French, this here fightin' wi' blackamoors, let 'em talk as thaay wool."

"No more 'tain't. But 'twur a 'mazin fine talk as he gi'n us. Hev'ee seed ought 'twixt he and young missus?"

"Nothin' out o' th' common. I got plenty to do without lookin' arter the women, and 'tain't no bisness o' mine, nor o' thine neether."

David was preparing a stout rejoinder to this rebuke of the old retainer of the Winter family on his curiosity, but was summoned by his wife to the house to attend a customer; and by the time he could get out again Simon had disappeared.

The next day East and Tom arrived, and took possession of the Red Lion; and Englebourn was soon in a ferment of preparation for the wedding. East was not the man to do things by halves; and, seconded as he was by Miss Winter, and Hardy, and Tom, had soon made arrangements for all sorts of merrymaking. The school-children were to have a whole holiday, and, after scattering flowers at church and marching in the bridal procession, were to be entertained in a tent pitched in the home paddock of the Rectory, and to have an afternoon of games and prizes, and cake and tea. The bell-ringers, Harry's old comrades, were to have five shillings apiece, and a cricket match, and a dinner afterwards at the second public house, to which any other of his old friends whom Harry chose to ask, were to be also invited. The old men and women were to be fed in the village school-room; and East and Tom were to entertain a select party of the farmers and tradesmen, at the Red Lion; the tap of which hostelry was to be thrown open to all comers at the Captain's expense. It was not without considerable demur on the part of Miss Winter, that some of these indiscriminate festivities were allowed to pass. But after consulting with Hardy she relented, on condition that the issue of beer at the two public houses should be put under the control of David, the constable, who, on his part, promised that law and order should be well represented and maintained on the occasion. "Arter all, Miss, you sees, 'tis only for once in a waay," he said; "and 'twill make 'em

remember aal as hev bin said to 'em about the Indians, and the rest on't." So the Captain and his abettors having gained the constable as an ally, prevailed; and Englebourn, much wondering at itself, made ready for a general holiday.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE WEDDING-DAY.

One—more—poor—man—un-done—
One—more—poor—man—un-done.

THE belfry tower rocked and reeled, as that peal rang out, now merry now scornful, now plaintive, from whose narrow belfry windows, into the bosom of the soft south-west wind which was playing round the old grey tower of Englebourn church. And the wind caught the peal and played with it, and bore it away over Rectory and village street, and many a homestead, and gently waving field of ripening corn, and rich pasture and water-meadow, and tall whisper-woods of the Grange, and rolled it against the hill-side, and up the slope past the clump of firs on the Hawk's Lynch, till it died away on the wild stretches of common beyond.

The ringers bent lustily to their work. There had been no such ringing in Englebourn since the end of the great war. Not content with the usual peal out of church, they came back again and again in the afternoon, full of the good cheer which had been provided for them; and again and again the wedding peal rang out from the belfry in honor of their old comrade—

One—more—poor—man—un-done—
One—more—poor—man—un-done.

Such was the ungallant speech which for many generations had been attributed to the Englebourn wedding-bells; when you had once caught the words—as you would be sure to do from some wide-mouthed grinning boy, lounging over the churchyard rails to see the wedding pass—it would be impossible to persuade yourself that they did, in fact, say anything else. Somehow, Harry Winburn bore his undo-

ing in the most heroic manner, and did his duty throughout the trying day as a non-commissioned officer and bridegroom should. The only part of the performance arranged by his captain which he fairly resisted, was the proposed departure of himself and Patty to the station in the solitary post-chaise of Englebourn—a real old yellow—with a pair of horses. East, after hearing the sergeant's pleading on the subject of vehicles, at last allowed them to drive off in a tax-cart, taking a small boy with them behind, to bring it back.

As for the festivities, they went off without hitch, as such affairs will, where the leaders of the revels have their hearts there. The children had all played, romped, eaten and drunk themselves into a state of torpor by an early hour of the evening. The farmers' dinner was a decided success. East proposed the health of the bride and bridegroom, and was followed by Farmer Grove and the constable. David turned out in a new blue swallow-tailed coat, with metal buttons, of his own fabulous cut, in honor of the occasion. He and the farmer spoke like the leader of the Government and the Opposition in the House of Commons on an address to the Crown. There was not a pin to choose between their speeches, and a stranger hearing them would naturally have concluded that Harry had never been anything but the model boy and young man of the parish. Fortunately, the oratorical powers of Englebourn ended here; and East, and the majority of his guests, adjourned to the green, where the cricket was in progress. Each game lasted a very short time only, as the youth of Englebourn were not experts in the noble science, and lost their wickets one after another so fast, that Tom and Hardy had time to play out two matches with them, and then to retire on their laurals, while the afternoon was yet young.

The old folks in the village school-room enjoyed their beef and pudding, under the special superintendence of Miss Winter, and then toddled to their homes, and sat about in the warmest nooks they could find, mumbling of old times and the doings at Dr. Winter's wedding.

David devoted himself to superintending the issue of beer, swelling with importance, but so full of the milk of human kindness from the great event of the day that nobody minded his little airs. He did his duty so satisfactorily that, with the exception of one or two regular confirmed soakers, who stuck steadily to the tap of the Red Lion and there man

aged successfully to fuddle themselves, there was nothing like drunkenness. In short, it was one of those rare days when everything goes right, and everybody seems to be inclined to give and take, and to make allowances for their neighbours. By degrees the cricket flagged, and most of the men went off to sit over their pipes, and finish the evening in their own way. The boys and girls took to playing at "kissing in the ring;" and the children who had not already gone home sat in groups watching them.

Miss Winter had already disappeared, and Tom, Hardy and the Captain began to feel that they might consider their part finished. They strolled together off the green towards Hardy's lodgings, the Red Lion being still in possession of East's guests.

"Well, how do you think it all went off?" asked he.

"Nothing could have been better," said Hardy; "and they all seem so inclined to be reasonable that I don't think we shall even have a roaring song along the street to-night when the Red Lion shuts up."

"And you are satisfied, Tom?"

"I should think so. I have been hoping for this day any time this four years, and now it has come, and gone off well, too, thanks to you, Harry."

"Thanks to me? Very good; I am open to any amount of gratitude.,'

"I think you have every reason to be satisfied with your second day's work at Englebourn, at any rate."

"So I am. I only hope it may turn out as well as the first."

"Oh, there's no doubt about that."

"I don't know. I rather believe in the rule of contraries."

"How do you mean?"

"Why, when you inveigled me over from Oxford, and we carried off the sergeant from the authorities, and defeated the yeomanry in that tremendous thunder storm, I thought we were a couple of idiots, and deserved a week each in the lockup for our pains. That business turned out well. This time we have started with flying colors and bells ringing, and so ——"

"This business will turn out better. Why not?"

"Then let us manage a third day's work in these parts as soon as possible. I should like to get to the third degree of comparison, and perhaps the superlative will turn up

trumps for me somehow. Are there many more young women in the place as pretty as Mrs. Winburn? This marrying complaint is very catching, I find."

"There's my cousin Katie," said Tom, looking stealthily at Hardy; "I won't allow that there's any face in the country-side to match hers. What do you say, Jack?"

Hardy was confused by this sudden appeal.

"I haven't been long enough here to judge," he said. "I have always considered Miss Winter very beautiful. I see it is nearly seven o'clock, and I have a call or two to make in the village. I should think you ought to get some rest after this tiring day, Capt. East?"

"What are you going to do, Tom?"

"Well, I was thinking of just throwing a fly over the mill tail. There's such a fine head of water on."

"Isn't it too bright?"

"Well, perhaps it is a little; marrying weather and fishing weather don't agree. Only what else is there to do? But if you are tired," he added, looking at East, "I don't care a straw about it. I shall stay with you."

"Not a bit of it. I shall hobble down with you, and lie on the bank and smoke a cheroot."

"No, you shan't walk, at any rate. I can borrow the constable's pony, old Nibble, the quietest beast in the world. He'll stand for a week if we like, while I fish and you lie and look on. I'll be off, and bring him around in two minutes."

"Then we shall meet for a clumsy tea at nine at my lodgings," said Hardy, as he went off to his pastoral duties.

Tom and East, in due time, found themselves by the side of the stream. There was only a small piece of fishable water in Englebourn. The fine stream, which, a mile or so below, in the Grange grounds, might be called a river, came into respectable existence only about two hundred yards above Englebourn Mill. Here two little chalk brooks met, and former millers had judiciously deepened the channel, and dammed the united waters back so as to get a respectable reservoir. Above the junction the little weedy, bright, creeping brooks afforded good sport for small truants groppling about with their hands, or bobbing with lobworms under the hollow banks, but were not available for the scientific angler. The parish ended at the fence next below the mill garden, on the other side of which the land was part of the Grange estate. So there was just the

piece of still water above the mill, and the one field below it, over which Tom had leave. On ordinary occasions this would have been enough, with careful fishing, to last him till dark; but his nerves were probably somewhat excited by the events of the day, and East sat near and kept talking; so he got over his water faster than usual. At any rate, he had arrived for the second time at the envious fence before the sun was down. The fish were wondrous wary in the miller's bit of water—as might be expected, for they led a dog of a life there, between the miller and his men, and their nets, and baits of all kinds always set. So Tom thought himself lucky to get a couple of decent fish, the only ones that were moving within his liberty; but he could not help looking with covetous eyes on the fine stretch of water below, all dimpling with rises.

"Why don't you get over and fish below?" said East, from his seat on the bank; "don't mind me. I can watch you; besides, lying on the turf on such an evening is luxury enough by itself."

"I can't go. Both sides below belong to that fellow Wurley."

"The sergeant's amiable landlord and prosecutor?"

"Yes; and the yeoman with whom you exchanged shots on the common."

"Hang it, Tom, just jump over and catch a brace of his trout. Look how they are rising."

"No, I don't know. I never was very particular about poaching, but somehow I shouldn't like to do it on his land. I don't like him well enough."

"You're right, I believe. But, just look there. There's a whopper rising not more than ten yards below the rail. You might reach him, I think, without tresspassing, from where you stand."

"Shall I have a shy at him?"

"Yes; it can't be poaching if you don't go on his grounds."

Tom could not resist the temptation, and threw over the rails, which crossed the stream from hedge to hedge to mark the boundaries of the parish, until he got well over the place where the fish was rising.

"There, that was at your fly," said East, hobbling up in great excitement.

"All right, I shall have him directly. There he is. Hullo!

Harry, I say! Splash with your stick. Drive the brute back. Bad luck to him. Look at that!"

The fish when hooked had come straight up stream towards his captor, and notwithstanding East's attempts to frighten him back, he rushed in under the before-mentioned rails, which were adorned with jagged nails, to make crossing on them unpleasant for the Englebourn boys. Against one of these Tom's line severed, and the waters closed over two beauteous flies, and some six feet of lovely taper gut.

East laughed loud and merrily; and Tom, crestfallen as he was, was delighted to hear the old ring coming back into his friend's voice.

"Harry, old fellow, you're picking up already in this glorious air."

"Of course I am. Two or three more weddings and fishings will set me up altogether. How could you be so green as to throw over those rails? It's a proper lesson to you, Tom, for poaching."

"Well, that's cool. Didn't I throw down stream to please you?"

"You ought to have resisted temptation. But, I say, what are you at?"

"Putting on another cast, of course."

"Why, you're not going on to Wurley's land?"

"No; I suppose not. I must try the mill tail again."

"It's no good. You've tried it over twice, and I'm getting bored."

"Well, what shall we do then?"

"I've a mind to get up to the hill there to see the sun set —what's its name?—where I waited with the cavalry that night, you know."

"Oh! the Hawk's Lynch. Come along, then; I'm your man."

So Tom put up his rod, and caught the old pony, and the two friends were soon on their way towards the common, through lanes at the back of the village.

The wind had sunk to sleep as the shadows lengthened. There was no sound abroad except that of Nibble's hoofs on the turf,—not even the hum of insects; for the few persevering gnats, who were still dancing about in the slanting glints of sunshine that struck here and there across the lanes, had left off humming. Nothing living met them except an occasional stag-beetle, steering clumsily down the lane, and seeming, like a heavy coaster, to have as much to

do as he could fairly manage in keeping clear of them. They walked on in silence for some time, which was broken at last by East.

"I haven't had time to tell you about my future prospects."

"How do you mean? Has anything happened?"

"Yes. I got a letter two days ago from New Zealand, where I find I am a considerable landowner. A cousin of mine has died out there and has left me his property."

"Well, you're not going to leave England, surely?"

"Yes, I am. The doctors say the voyage will do me good, and the climate is just the one to suit me. What's the good of my staying here? I shan't be fit for service again for years. I shall go on half-pay, and become an enterprising acriculturist at the Antipodes. I have spoken to the sergeant, and arranged that he and his wife shall go with me; so, as soon as I can get his discharge, and he has done honeymooning, we shall start. I wish you would come with us."

Tom could scarcely believe his ears; but soon found that East was in earnest, and had an answer to all his remonstrances. Indeed, he had very little to say against the plan, for it jumped with his own humor; and he could not help admitting that, under the circumstances, it was a wise one, and that, with Harry Winburn for his head man, East couldn't do better than carry it out.

"I knew you would soon come around to it," said the captain; "what could I do dawdling about at home, with just enough money to keep me and get me into mischief? There I shall have a position and an object; and one may be of some use, and make one's mark in a new country. And we'll get a snug berth ready for you by the time you're starved out of the old country. England isn't the place for poor men with any go in them."

"I believe you're right, Harry," said Tom, mournfully.

"I know I am. And in a few years, when we've made our fortunes, we'll come back and have a look at the old country, and perhaps buy up half Englebourn and lay our bones in the old church yard."

"And if we don't make our fortunes?"

"Then we'll stay out there."

"Well, if I were my own master I think I should make one with you. But I could never leave my father and mother, or—or—"

"Oh, I understand. Of course, if matters go all right in that quarter, I have nothing more to say. But, from what you have told me, I thought you might be glad of a regular break in your life, a new start in a new world."

"Very likely I may. I should have said so myself this morning. But somehow I feel to-night more hopeful than I have for years."

"Those wedding chimes are running in your head."

"Yes; and they have lifted a load off my heart too. Four years ago I was very near doing the greatest wrong a man can do to that girl who was married to-day, and to that fine fellow her husband, who was the first friend I ever had. Ever since then I have been doing my best to set matters straight, and have often made them crookeder. But to-day they are all straight, thank God, and I feel as if a chain were broken from off my neck. All has come right for them, and perhaps my own turn will come before long."

"To be sure it will. I must be introduced to a certain young lady before we start. I shall tell her that I don't mean to give up hopes of seeing her on the other side of the world."

"Well, here we are on the common. What a glorious sunset! Come, stir up, Nibble. We shall be on the Lynch just in time to see him dip if we push on."

Nibble, the ancient pony, finding that there was no help for it, scrambled up the greater part of the ascent successfully. But his wheezings and roarings during the operation excited East's pity. So he dismounted when they came to the foot of the Hawk's Lynch, and, tying Nibble's bridle to a furze-bush—a most unnecessary precaution—set to work to scale the last and deepest bit of the ascent with the help of his stick and Tom's strong arm.

They paused every ten paces or so to rest and look at the sunset. The broad vale below lay in purple shadow; the soft flocks of little clouds high up over their heads, and stretching away to the eastern horizon, floated in a sea of rosy light; and the stems of the Scotch firs stood out like columns of ruddy flame.

"Why, this beats India," said East, putting up his hand to shade his eyes, which were fairly dazzled by the blaze. "What a contrast to the last time I was up here! Do you remember that awful black-blue sky?"

"Don't I? Like a night-mare. Hullo! who's here?"

"Why, if it isn't the parson and Miss Winter," said East, smiling.

True enough, there they were, standing together on the very verge of the mound, beyond the firs, some ten yards in front of the last comers, looking out into the sunset.

"I say, Tom, another good omen," whispered East; "hadn't we better beat a retreat?"

Before Tom could answer, or make up his mind what to do, Hardy turned his head and caught sight of them, and then Katie turned too, blushing like the little clouds overhead. It was an embarrassing moment. Tom stammered out that they had come up quite by chance, and then set to work, well seconded by East, to look desperately unconscious, and to expatiate on the beauties of the view. The light began to fade, and the little clouds to change again from soft pink to grey, and the evening star shone out clear as they turned to descend the hill, when the Englebourn clock chimed nine.

Katie attached herself to Tom, while Hardy helped the Captain down the steep pitch, and on to the back of Nibble. They went a little ahead. Tom was longing to speak to his cousin, but could not tell how to begin. At last Katie broke the silence:

"I am so vexed that this should have happened!"

"Are you, dear? So am not I," he said, pressing her arm to his side.

"But I mean, it seems so forward—as if I had met Mr. Hardy here on purpose. What will your friend think of me?"

"He will think no evil."

"But indeed, Tom, do tell him, pray. It was quite an accident. You know how I and Mary used to go up the Hawk's Lynch whenever we could, on fine evenings."

"Yes, dear, I know it well."

"And I thought of you both so much to-day, that I couldn't help coming up here."

"And you found Hardy? I don't wonder. I should come up to see the sun set every night, if I lived at Englebourn."

"No. He came up sometime after me. Straight up the hill. I did not see him till he was quite close. I could not run away then. Indeed, it was not five minutes before you came."

"Five minutes are as good as a year sometimes,"

"And you will tell your friend, Tom, how it happened?"

"Indeed I will, Katie. May I not tell him something more?"

He looked round for an answer, and there was just light enough to read it in her eye.

"My debt is deepening to the Hawk's Lynch," he said, as they walked on through the twilight. "Blessed five minutes! Whatever else they may take with them, they will carry my thanks for ever. Look how clear and steady the light of that star is, just over the church tower. I wonder whether Mary is at a great hot dinner. Shall you write to her soon?"

"Oh, yes. To-night."

"You may tell her that there is no better Englishman walking the earth than my friend, John Hardy. Here we are at his lodgings. East and I are going to tea with him. Wish them good night, and I will see you home."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

From the Englebourn festivities Tom and East returned to London. The Captain was bent on starting for his possessions in the South Pacific; and, as he regained strength, energized over all his preparations, and went about in cabs purchasing agricultural implements, sometimes by the light of nature, and sometimes under the guidance of Harry Winburn. He invested also in something of a library, and in large quantities of saddlery. In short, packages of all kinds began to increase and multiply upon him. Then there was the selecting of a vessel, and all the negotiations with the ship's captain as to terms, and the business of getting introduced to, and conferring with, people from the colony, or who were supposed to know something about it. Altogether, East had plenty of work on his hands; and the more he had to do, the better and more cheery he became.

Tom, on the contrary, was rather lower than usual. His

half-formed hopes that some good luck was going to happen to him after Patty's marriage, were beginning to grow faint, and the contrast of his friend's definite present purpose in life with his own uncertainty, made him more or less melancholy in spite of all his efforts. His father had offered him a tour abroad, now that he had finished with Oxford, urging that he seemed to want a change to freshen him up before buckling to a profession, and that he would never, in all likelihood, have such another chance. But he could not make up his mind to accept the offer. The attraction to London was too strong for him; and, though he saw little hopes of anything happening to improve his prospects, he could not keep away from it. He spent most of his time when not with East, in haunting the neighborhood of Mr. Porter's house in Belgravia, and the places where he was likely to catch distant glimpses of Mary, avoiding all chance of actual meeting or recognition, from which he shrank in his present frame of mind.

The nearest approach to the flame which he allowed himself was a renewal of his old friendship with Grey, who was still working on in his Westminister rookery. He had become a great favorite with Mrs. Porter, who was always trying to get him to her house to feed him properly, and was much astonished, and sometimes almost provoked, at the small success of her hospitable endeavors. Grey was so taken up with his own pursuits that it did not occur to him to be surprised that he never met Tom at the house of his relations. He was innocent of all knowledge or suspicion of the real state of things, so that Tom could talk to him with perfect freedom about his uncle's household, picking up all such scraps of information as Grey possessed without compromising himself or feeling shy.

Thus the two old schoolfellows lived on together after their return from Englebourn, in a set of chambers in the Temple, which one of Tom's college friends (who had been beguiled from the perusal of Stephen's Commentaries and aspirations after the woolsack, by the offer of a place on board a yacht and a cruise to Norway,) had fortunately lent him.

We join company with our hero again on a fine July morning. Readers will begin to think that, at any rate, he is always blessed with fine weather whatever troubles he may have to endure ; but, if we are not to have fine weather in novels, when and where are we to have it ? It was

a fine July morning, then, and the streets were already beginning to feel sultry as he worked his way westward. Grey, who had never given up hopes of bringing Tom round to his own views, had not neglected the opportunities which this residence in town offered, and had enlisted Tom's services on more than one occasion. He had found him specially useful in instructing the big boys, whom he was trying to bring together and civilize in a "Young Men's Club," in the rudiments of cricket on Saturday evenings. But on the morning in question an altogether different work was on hand.

A lady living some eight or nine miles to the north-west of London, who took great interest in Grey's doings, had asked him to bring the children of his night-school down to spend a day in her grounds, and this was the happy occasion. It was before the days of cheap excursions by rail, so that vans had to be found for the party ; and Grey had discovered a benevolent remover of furniture in Paddington, who was ready to take them at a reasonable figure. The two vans, with awnings and curtains in the height of fashion, and horses with tasselled ear-caps, and everything handsome about them, were already drawn up in the midst of a group of excited children, and scarcely less excited mothers, when Tom arrived. Grey was arranging his forces, and laboring to reduce the Irish children, who formed almost half his ragged little flock, into something like order before starting. By degrees this was managed, and Tom was placed in command of the rear van, while Grey reserved the leading one to himself. The children were divided and warned not to lean over the sides and fall out—a somewhat superfluous caution as most of them, though unused to riding in any legitimate manner, were pretty well used to balancing themselves behind any vehicle which offered as much as a spike to sit on, out of sight of the driver. Then came the rush into the vans. Grey and Tom took up their places next the doors as conductors, and the procession lumbered off with great success and much shouting from treble voices.

Tom soon found that he had plenty of work on his hands to keep the peace among his flock. The Irish element was in a state of wild effervescence, and he had to draft them down to his own end, leaving the foremost cart of the van to the soberer English children. He was much struck by the contrast of the whole set to the Englebourn schoo

children, whom he had lately seen under somewhat similar circumstances. The difficulty with them had been to draw them out, and put anything like life into them ; here, all he had to do was to suppress the superbundant life. However, the vans held on their way, and got safely into the suburbs, and so at last to an occasional hedge, and a suspicion of trees, and green fields beyond.

It became more and more difficult now to keep the boys in ; and when they came to a hill, where the horses had to walk, he yielded to their entreaties, and, opening the door, let them out, insisting only that the girls should remain seated. They scattered over the sides of the roads, and up the banks ; now chasing pigs and fowls up to the very doors of their owners ; now gathering the commonest road-side weeds, and running up to show them to him, and ask their names, as if they were rare treasures. The ignorance of most of the children as to the commonest country matters astonished him. One small boy particularly came back time after time to ask him, with solemn face "Please, sir, is this the country?' and when at last he allowed that it was, rejoined, "Then, please, where are the nuts ?"

The clothing of most of the Irish boys began to tumble to pieces in an alarming manner. Grey had insisted on their being made tidy for the occasion, but the tidiness was of a superficial kind. The hasty stitching soon began to give way, and they were rushing about with wild locks; the strips of what once might have been nether garments hanging about their legs ; their feet and heads bare, the shoes which their mothers had borrowed for the state occasion having been deposited under the seat of the van. So, when the procession arrived at the trim lodge-gates of their hostess, and his charge descended and fell in on the beautifully clipped turf at the side of the drive, Tom felt some of the sensations of Falstaff when he had to lead his ragged regiment through Coventry streets.

He was soon at his ease again, and enjoyed the day thoroughly, and the drive home; but, as they drew near town again, a sense of discomfort and shyness came over him, and he wished the journey to Westminster well over, and hoped that the carman would have the sense to go through the quiet parts of the town.

He was much disconcerted consequently, when the vans came to a sudden stop opposite one of the Park entrances, in the Bayswater Road. "What in the world is Grey

about?" he thought, as he saw him get out, and all the children after him. So he got out himself, and went forward to get an explanation.

"Oh, I have told the man that he need not drive us round to Westminster. He is close at home here, and his horses have had a hard day; so we can just get out and walk home."

"What, across the Park?" asked Tom.

"Yes, it will amuse the children, you know."

"But they're tired," persisted Tom; "come now, it's all nonsense letting the fellow off; he's bound to take us back."

"I'm afraid I have promised him," said Grey; "besides, the children all think it a treat. Don't you all want to walk across the Park?" he went on turning to them, and a general affirmative chorus was the answer. So Tom had nothing for it but to shrug his shoulders, empty his own van, and follow into the Park with his convoy, not in the best humor with Grey for having arranged this ending to their excursion.

They might have got over a third of the distance between the Bayswater Road and the Serpentine, when he was aware of a small, thin voice addressing him.

"Oh, please, won't you carry me a bit? I'm so tired," said the voice. He turned in some trepidation to look for the speaker, and found her to be a sickly, undergrown, little girl, of ten or thereabouts, with large, pleading, grey eyes, very shabbily dressed, and a little lame. He had remarked her several times in the course of the day, not for any beauty or grace about her, for the poor child had none, but for her transparent confidence and trustfulness. After dinner, as they had been all sitting on the grass under the shade of a great elm to hear Grey read a story, and Tom had been sitting a little apart from the rest with his back against the trunk, she had come up and sat quietly down by him, leaning on his knee. Then he had seen her go up and take the hand of the lady who had entertained them, and walk along by her, talking without the least shyness, Soon afterwards she had squeezed into the swing by the side of the beautifully-dressed little daughter of the same lady, who, after looking for a minute at her shabby little sister with large round eyes, had jumped out and run off to her mother, evidently in a state of childish bewilderment as to whether it was not wicked for a child to wear such dirty old clothes.

Tom had chuckled to himself as he saw Cinderella set

tling herself comfortably in the swing in the place of the ousted princess, and had taken a fancy to the child, speculating to himself as to how she could have been brought up, to be so utterly unconscious of differences of rank and dress. "She seems really to treat her fellow-creatures as if she had been studying the *Sartor Resartus*," he thought. "She was cut down through all clothes-philosophy without knowing it. I wonder, if she had a chance, whether she would go and sit down in the Queen's lap?"

He did not at the time anticipate that she would put his own clothes-philosophy to so severe a test before the day was over. The child had been as merry and active as any of the rest during the earlier part of the day; but now, as he looked down in answer to her reiterated plea, "Won't you carry me a bit? I'm so tired!" he saw that she could scarcely drag one foot after another.

What was to be done? He was already keenly alive to the discomfort of walking across Hyde Park in a procession of ragged children, with such a figure of fun as Grey at their head, looking, in his long, rusty, straight-cut black coat, as if he had come fresh out of Noah's ark. He didn't care about it so much while they were on the turf in the out-of-the-way parts, and would meet nobody but guards, and nurse-maids, and tradespeople, and mechanics out for an evening's stroll. But the Drive and Rotten Row lay before them, and must be crossed. It was just the most crowded time of the day. He had almost made up his mind once or twice to stop Grey and the procession, and propose to sit down for half-an-hour or so and let the children play, by which time the world would be going home to dinner. But there was no play left in the children; and he had resisted the temptation, meaning, when they came to the most crowded part, to look unconscious, as if it were by chance that he had got into such company, and had in fact nothing to do with them. But now, if he listened to the child's plea, and carried her, all hope of concealment was over. If he did not, he felt that there would be no greater flunkey in the Park that evening than Thomas Brown, the enlightened radical and philosopher, amongst the young gentlemen riders in Rotten Row, or the powdered footman lounging behind the great blaring carriages in the Drive.

So he looked down at the child once or twice in a state of puzzle. A third time she looked up with her great

eyes, and said, "Oh, please carry me a bit!" and her piteous, tired face turned the scale. "If she were Lady Mary or Lady Blanche," thought he, "I should pick her up at once, and be proud of the burden. Here goes!" And he took her up in his arms, and walked on, desperate and reckless.

Notwithstanding all his philosophy, he felt his ears tingling and his face getting red, as they approached the drive. It was crowded. They were kept standing a minute or two at the crossing. He made a desperate effort to abstract himself wholly from the visible world, and retire in a state of serene contemplation. But it would not do; and he was painfully conscious of the stare of lack-lustre eyes of well dressed men leaning over the rails, and the amused look of delicate ladies, lounging in open carriages, and surveying him and Grey and their ragged rout through glasses.

At last they scrambled across, and he breathed freely for a minute, as they struggled along the comparatively quiet path leading to Albert Gate, and stopped to drink at the fountain. Then came Rotten Row, and another pause amongst the loungers, and a plunge into the Ride, where he was nearly run down by two men whom he had known at Oxford. They shouted to him to get out of the way; and he felt the hot defiant blood rushing through his veins, as he strode across without heeding. They passed on, one of them having to pull his horse out of his stride to avoid him. Did they recognize him? He felt a strange mixture of utter indifference, and longing to strangle them.

The worst was now over; besides, he was getting used to the situation, and his good sense was beginning to rally. So he marched through Albert Gate, carrying his ragged little charge, who prattled away to him without a pause, and surrounded by the rest of the children, scarcely caring who might see him.

They won safely through the omnibuses and carriages on the Kensington Road, and so into Belgravia. At last he was quite at his ease again, and began listening to what the child was saying to him, and was strolling carelessly along, when once more, at one of the crossings, he was startled by a shout from some riders. There was straw laid down in the street, so that he had not heard them as they cantered round the corner, hurrying home to dress for dinner; and they were all but upon him, and had to rein up their horses sharply.

The party consisted of a lady and two gentlemen, on

old, the other young; the latter dressed in the height of fashion, and with the supercilious air which Tom hated from his soul. The shout came from the young man, and drew Tom's attention to him first. All the devil rushed up as he recognized St. Cloud. The lady's horse swerved against his, and began to rear. He put his hand on its bridle, as if he had a right to protect her. Another glance told Tom that the lady was Mary, and the old gentleman, fussing up on his stout cob on the other side of her, Mr. Porter.

They all knew him in another moment. He stared from one to the other, was conscious that she turned her horse's head sharply, so as to disengage the bridle from St. Cloud's hand, and of his insolent stare, and of the embarrassment of Mr. Porter; and then, setting his face straight before him, he passed on in a bewildered dream, never looking back till they were out of sight. The dream gave way to bitter and wild thoughts, upon which it will do none of us any good to dwell. He put down the little girl outside the schools, turning abruptly from the mother, a poor widow in scant, well-preserved black clothes, who was waiting for the child, and began thanking him for his care of her; refused Grey's pressing invitation to tea, and set his face eastward. Bitterer and more wild and more scornful grew his thoughts as he strode along past the Abbey, and up Whitehall, and away down the Strand, holding on over the crossings without paying the slightest heed to vehicle, or horse, or man. Incensed coachmen had to pull up with a jerk to avoid running over him, and more than one sturdy walker turned round in indignation at a collision which they felt had been intended, or at least which there had been no effort to avoid.

As he passed under the window of the Banqueting Hall, and by the place in Charing-cross where the pillory use to stand, he growled to himself what a pity it was that the times for cutting off heads and cropping ears had gone by. The whole of the dense population from either side of the Strand seemed to have crowded out into that thoroughfare to impede his march and aggravate him. The further eastward he got the thicker got the crowd; and the vans, the omnibuses, the cabs, seemed to multiply and get noisier. Not an altogether pleasant sight to a man in the most Christian frame of mind is the crowd that a fine summer evening fetches out into the roaring Strand, as the sun

fetches out flies on the window of a village grocery. T him just then it was at once depressing and provoking, an he went shouldering his way toward Temple Bar as thor oughly out of tune as he had been for many a long day.

As he passed from the narrowest part of the Strand int the space round St. Clement Danes' church, he was startle in a momentary lull of the uproar, by the sound of chimin bells. He slackened his pace to listen; but a huge va lumbered by, shaking the houses on both sides, and drown ing all sounds but its own rattle; and then he found hin self suddenly immersed in a crowd, vociferating and ges ticulating round a policeman, who was conveying a woma towards the station house. He shouldered through it—ar other lull came, and with it the same slow, gentle, cal cadence of chiming bells. Again and again he caught it a he passed on to Temple Bar; whenever the roar subside the notes of the old hymn tune came dropping down o him like balm from the air. If the ancient benefactor wh caused the bells of St. Clement Danes' church to be a ranged to play that chime so many times a day is allowe to hover round the steeple at such times, to watch the effe of his benefaction on posterity, he must have been well sa isfied on that evening. Tom passed under the Bar, an turned into the Temple another man, softened again, an in his right mind.

"There's always a voice saying the right thing to yo somewhere, if you'll only listen for it," he thought. H took a few turns in the court to clear his head, and the went up, and found Harry East reclining on a sofa, in fu view of the gardens and river, solacing himself with his a customed cheroot.

"Oh, here you are," he said, making room on the sofa; "how did it go off?"

"Well enough. Where have you been?"

"In the City and at the Docks. I've been all over o vessel. She's a real clipper."

"When do you sail?"

"Not quite certain. I should say in a fortnight, though East puffed away for a minute, and then, as Tom said not ing, went on. "I'm not so sweet on it as the time drav near. There are more of my chums turning up every da from India at the Rag. And this is uncommonly pleasan too, living with you here in the chambers. You may thin it odd, but I don't half like getting rid of you."

"Thanks: but I don't think you will get rid of me."

"How do you mean?"

"I mean that I shall go with you, if my people will let me, and you will take me."

"W-h-e-w! Anything happened?"

"Yes."

"You've seen her?"

"Yes."

"Well, go on. Don't keep a fellow in suspense. I shall be introduced, and eat one of the old boy's good dinners, after all, before I sail."

Tom looked out of window, and found some difficulty in getting out the words, "No, it's all up."

"You don't mean it?" said East, coming to a sitting position by Tom's side. "But how do you know? Are you sure? What did she say?"

"Nothing. I haven't spoken to her; but it's all up. She was riding with her father and the fellow to whom she's engaged. I have heard it a dozen times, but never would believe it."

"But, is that all? Riding with her father and another man! Why, there's nothing in that."

"Yes, but there is though. You should have seen his look. And they all knew me well enough, but not one of them nodded even."

"Well, there's not much in that after all. It may have been chance, or you may have fancied it."

"No, one isn't quite such a fool. However, I have no right to complain, and I won't. I could bear it all well enough if he were not such a cold-hearted blackguard."

"What, this fellow she was riding with?"

"Yes. He hasn't a heart the size of a pin's head. He'll break her's. He's a mean brute, too. She can't know him, though he has been after her this year and more. They must have forced her into it. Ah! it's a bitter business," and he put his head between his hands, and East heard the deep catches of his laboring breath, as he sat by him, feeling deeply for him, but puzzled what to say.

"She can't be worth so much after all, Tom," he said at last, "if she would have such a fellow as that. Depend upon it she's not what you thought her."

Tom made no answer; so the captain went on presently, thinking he had hit the right note.

"Cheer up, old boy. There's as good fish in the sea yet as ever came out of it. Don't you remember the song—whose is it? Lovelace's:—

'If she be not fair for me,
What care I for whom she be?'"

Tom started up almost fiercely, but recovered himself in a moment, and then leant his head down again.

"Don't talk about her, Harry; you don't know her," he said.

"And don't want to know her, Tom, if she is going to throw you over. Well, I shall leave you for an hour or so. Come up to me presently at the Rag, when you feel better."

East started for his club, debating within himself what he could do for his friend—whether calling out the party mightn't do good.

Tom, left to himself, broke down at first sadly; but, as the evening wore on he began to rally, and sat down and wrote a long letter to his father, making a clean breast, and asking his permission to go with East.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE END.

"My dear Katie,—I know you will be vey much pained when you read this letter. You two have been my only confidantes, and you have always kept me up, and encouraged me to hope that all would come right. And after all that happened last week, Patty's marriage, and your engagement—the two things upon earth, with one exception, that I most wished for—I quite felt that my own turn was coming. I can't tell why I had such a strong feeling about it, but somehow all the most important changes in my life for the last four years have been so interwoven with Patty and Harry Winburn's history, that, now they were married, I was sure something would happen to me as soon as I came to London. And I was not wrong. Dear Katie, I can hardly bring myself to write to it. It is all over. I met her in the street to-day; she was riding with her father and the man I told you about. They had to pull up not to ri-

over me; so I had a good look at her, and there can be no mistake about it. I have often tried to reason myself into the belief that the evil day must come sooner or later, and to prepare myself for it; but I might have spared myself, for it could not have been worse than it is if I had never anticipated it. My future is all a blank now. I can't stay in England; so I have written home to ask them to let me go to New Zealand with East, and I am sure they will consent, when they know all.

"I shall wait in town till I get the answer. Perhaps I may be able to get off with East in a few weeks. The sooner the better; but, of course, I shall not go without seeing you and dear old Jack. You mustn't mind me calling him Jack. The only thing that it gives me any pleasure to think about, is your engagement. It is so right; and one wants to see something going right, some one getting their due, to keep alive one's belief in justice being done somehow or another in the world. And I do see it, and acknowledge it, when I think over his history and mine since we first met. We have both got our due; and you have got yours, Katie, for you have got the best fellow in England.

"Ah! if I only could think that she has got hers! If I could only believe that the man she has chosen is worthy of her! I will try hard to think better of him. There must be more good in him that I have ever seen, or she would never have engaged herself to him. But I can't bear to stop here, and see it all going on. The sooner I am out of England the better. I send you a parcel with this; it contains her notes, and some old flowers, and other matters which I havn't the heart to burn. You will be the best judge what should be done with them. If you see your way to managing it, I should like her to know that I had sent them all to you, and that, whatever may happen to me hereafter, my love for her has been the mainstay and the guiding-star of my life ever since that happy time when you all came to stay with us in my first long vacation. It found me eaten up with selfishness and conceit, the puppet of my own lusts and vanities, and has left me—well, never mind what it has left me. At any rate, if I have not gone from worse to worse, it is all owing to her; and she ought to know it. It cannot be wrong to let her know what good she has scattered unknowingly about her path. May God bless and reward her for it, and you, too, dear cousin, for all

your long love and kindness to one who is very unworthy of, but very thankful for them.

"Ever yours, affectionately,

"T. B."

The above letter, and that to his father, asking for leave to emigrate, having been written and sent off, Tom was left, on the afternoon of the day following his upset, making manful, if not very successful, efforts to shake off the load of depression which weighed on him, and to turn his thoughts resolutely forward to a new life in a new country. East was away at the Docks. There was no one moving in the Temple. The men who had business were all at Westminster, or out of sight and hearing in the recesses of their chambers. Those who had none were for the most part away enjoying themselves, in one way or another amongst the mighty whirl of the mighty human sea of London. There was nothing left for him to do; he had written the only two letters he had to write, and had only to sit still and wait for the answers, killing the mean time as well as he could. Reading came hard to him, but it was the best thing to do, perhaps; at any rate he was trying it on, though his studies were constantly interrupted by long fits of absence of mind, during which, though his body remained in the Temple, he was again in the well-kept garden of Barton, or in the hazel wood under the lee of the Berkshire hills.

He was roused out of one of these reveries, and brought back to external life and Fig-tree Court, by a single knock at the outer door, and a shout of the newsman's boy for the paper. So he got up, found the paper, which he had forgotten to read, and, as he went to the door, cast his eye on it, and saw that a great match was going on at Lord's. This gave a new turn to his thoughts. He stood looking down stairs after the boy, considering whether he should not start at once for the match.

He would be sure to see a lot of acquaintances there at any rate. But the idea of seeing and having to talk to men acquaintances was more distasteful than his present solitude. He was turning to bury himself again in his hole, when he saw a white dog walk quietly up seven or eight stairs from the bottom of the flight, and then turn round, and look for some one to follow.

"How odd!" thought Tom, as he watched him; "as like as two peas. It can't be. No. Why, yes it is." And then he whistled, and called "Jack," and the dog looked up, and wagged his tail, as much as to say, "All right I'm coming directly; but I must wait for my master." The next moment Drysdale appeared at the bottom of the stairs, and looking up, said—

"Oh! that's you, is it? I'm all right then. So you knew the old dog?"

"I should rather think so," said Tom. "I hope I never forget a dog or horse I have once known."

In the short minute which Drysdale and Jack took to arrive at his landing, Tom had time for a rush of old college memories, in which the grave and gay, pleasant and bitter, were strangely mingled. The night when he had been first brought to his senses about Patty came up very vividly before him, and the commemoration days, when he had last seen Drysdale. "How strange!" he thought, is my old life coming back again just now? Here, on the very day after it is all over, comes back the man with whom I was so intimate up to the day it began, and have never seen since. What does it mean?"

There was a little touch of embarrassment in the manner of both of them as they shook hands at the top of the stairs, and turned into the chambers. Tom motioned to Jack to take his old place at one end of the sofa, and began caressing him there, the dog showing unmistakably, by gesture and whine, that delight at renewing an old friendship for which his race are so nobly distinguished. Drysdale threw himself down in an arm-chair, and watched them.

"So you knew the old dog, Brown?" he repeated.

"Knew him?—of course I did. Dear old Jack! How well he wears; he is scarcely altered at all."

"Very little; only steadier. More than I can say for his master. I'm very glad you knew Jack."

"Come, Drysdale, take the other end of the sofa, or it won't look like old times. There, now I can fancy myself back at St. Ambrose's."

"By Jove, Brown, you're a real good fellow. I always said so, even after that last letter. You pitched it rather strong in that though. I was very near coming back from Norway to quarrel with you."

"Well, I was very angry at being left in the lurch by you and Blake."

"You got the coin all right, I suppose? You never acknowledged it."

"Didn't I? Then I ought to have. Yes, I got it all right about six months afterwards. I ought to have acknowledged it, and I thought I had. I'm sorry I didn't. Now we're all quits, and wont talk any more about that rascally bill."

"I suppose I may light up," said Drysdale, dropping into his old lounging attitude on the sofa, and pulling out his cigar-case.

"Yes, of course. Will you have anything?"

"A cool drink wouldn't be amiss."

"They make a nice tankard with cider and a lump of ice at the Rainbow. What do you say to that?"

"It sounds touching," said Drysdale. So Tom posted off to Fleet Street to order the liquor, and came back followed by a waiter with the tankard. Drysdale took a long pull, and smacked his lips.

"That's a wrinkle," he said, handing the tankard to Tom.

"I suppose the lawyers teach all the publicans about here a trick or two. Why, one can fancy oneself back in the old quad, looking out on this court. If it wern't such an out-landish out-of-the-way place, I think I should take some chambers here myself. How did you get here?"

"Oh, they belong to a friend of mine who is away. But how did *you* get here?"

"Why, along the Strand in a Hansom."

"I mean, how did you know I was here?"

"Grey told me."

"What! Grey who was at St. Ambrose's with us?"

"Yes. You look puzzled."

"I didn't think you knew Grey."

"No more do I. But a stout old party I met last night —your godfather, I should think he is—told me where he was, and said I should get your address from him. So I looked him up this morning, in that dog-hole in Westminister where he lives. He didn't know Jack from Adam."

"But what in the world do you mean by my godfather?"

"I had better tell my story from the beginning, I see. Last night I did what I don't often do, went out to a great drum. There was an awful crash, of course, and you may guess what the heat was in these dog-days, with gas-lights

and wax-lights going, and a jam of people in every corner. I was fool enough to get into the rooms, so that my retreat was cut off; and I had to work right through, and got at last into a back room, which was not so full. The window was in a recess, and there was a balcony outside, looking over a little bit of garden. I got into the balcony, talking with a girl who was sensible enough to like the cool. Presently I heard a voice I thought I knew inside. Then I heard St. Ambrose, and then your name. Of course I listened; I couldn't help myself. They were just inside the window, in the recess, not five feet from us; so I heard pretty nearly ever word. Give us the tankard; I'm as dry as an ash-heap with talking."

Tom, scarcely able to control his impatience, handed the tankard. "But who was it?—you haven't told me," he said, as Drysdale put it down at last empty.

"Why, that d——d St. Cloud. He was giving you a nice character, in a sort of sneaking deprecatory way, as if he was sorry for it. Amongst other little tales, he said you used to borrow money from Jews—he knew it for a certainty because he had been asked himself to join you and another man—meaning me, of course—in such a transaction. You remember how he wouldn't acknowledge the money I lent him at play, and the note he wrote me which upset Blake so. I had never forgotten it. I knew I should get my chance some day, and here it was. I don't know what the girl thought of me, or how she got out of the balcony, but I stepped into the recess just as he had finished his precious story, and landed between him and a comfortable old boy, who was looking shocked. He *must* be your godfather, or something of the kind. I'll bet you a pony you are down for something handsome in his will."

"What was his name? Did you find out?"

"Yes; Potter, or Porter, or something like it. I've got his card somewhere. I just stared St. Cloud in the face, and you may depend upon it he winched. Then I told the old boy that I had heard their talk, and, as I was at St. Ambrose with you, I should like to have five minutes with him when St. Cloud had done. He seemed rather in a corner between us. However, I kept in sight till St. Cloud was obliged to draw off; and, to cut my story short, as the tankard is empty, I think I put you pretty straight there. You said we were quits just now: after last night, perhaps we are, for I told him the truth of the Benjamin story, and

I think he is squared. He seems a good sort of old boy. He's a relation of yours, eh?"

"Only a distant connexion. Did anything more happen?"

"Yes; I saw that he was flurried and didn't know quite what to think; so I asked him to let me call, and I would bring him some one else to speak to your character. He gave me his card, and I'm going to take Blake there to-day. Then I asked him where you were, and he didn't know, but said he thought Grey could tell me."

"It is very kind of you, Drysdale to take so much trouble."

"Trouble! I'd go from here to Jericho to be even with our fine friend. I never forget a bad turn. I met him afterwards in the cloak-room, and went out of the door close after him, to give him a chance if he wants to say anything. I only wish he would. But why do you suppose he is lying about you?"

"I can't tell. I've never spoken to him since he left Oxford. Never saw him till yesterday, riding with Mr. Porter. I suppose that reminded them of me."

"Well, St. Cloud is bent on getting round him for some reason or another, you may take your oath of that. Now my time's up; I shall go and pick up Blake. I should think I had better not take Jack to call in Eaton Square, though he'd give you a good character if he could speak; wouldn't you Jack?"

Jack wagged his tail, and descended from the sofa.

"Does Blake live up here? What is he doing?"

"Burning the candle at both ends, and in the middle, as usual. Yes, he's living near his club. He writes political articles, devilish well I hear, too, and is reading for the bar; beside which he is getting into society, and going out whenever he can, and fretting his soul out that he isn't prime minister, or someting of the kind. He won't last long at the pace he's going."

"I'm very sorry to hear it. But you'll come here again, Drysdale; or let me come and see you? I shall be very anxious to hear what has happened."

"Here's my pastboard; I shall be in town for another fortnight. Drop in when you like."

And so Drysdale and Jack went off, leaving Tom in a chaotic state of mind. All his old hopes were roused again as he thought over Drysdale's narrative. He could no

longer sit still, so he rushed out, and walked up and down the river-side walk, in the Temple gardens, where a fine breeze blowing, at a pace which astonished the gate-keepers and the nursery-maids and children, who were taking the air in that favorite spot. Once or twice he returned to chambers, and at last found East reposing after his excursion to the Docks.

East's quick eye saw at once that something had happened; and he had very soon heard the whole story; upon which he deliberated for some minutes, and rejoiced Tom's heart by saying: "Ah! all up with New Zealand, I see. I shall be introduced after all before we start. Come along; I must stand you a dinner on the strength of the good news, and we'll drink her health."

Tom called twice that evening at Drysdale's lodgings, but he was out. The next morning he called again. Drysdale had gone to Hampton Court races, and had left no message. He left a note for him, but got no answer. It was trying work. Another day passed without any word from Drysdale, who seemed never to be at home; and no answer to either of his letters. On the third morning he heard from his father. It was just the answer which he had expected—as kind a letter as could be written. Mr. Brown had suspected how matters stood at one time, but had given up the idea in consequence of Tom's silence; which he regetted, as possibly things might have happened otherwise had he known the state of the case. It was too late now, however; and the less said the better about what might have been. As to New Zealand, he should not oppose Tom's going, if, after some time, he continued in his present mind. It was very natural for him just now to wish to go They would talk it over as soon as Tom came home; which Mr. Brown begged him to do at once, or, at any rate, as soon as he had seen his friend off. Home was the best place for him.

Tom sighed as he folded it up; the hopes of the last three days seemed to be fading away again. He spent another restless day; and by night had persuaded himself that Drysdale's mission had been a complete failure, and that he did not write and kept out of the way out of kindness for him.

"Why, Tom, old fellow, you look as down in the mouth as ever to-night," East said, when Tom opened the door for him about midnight, on his return from his club; "cheer up; you may depend it's all to go right."

"But I haven't seen Drysdale again, and he hasn't written."

"There's nothing in that. He was glad enough to do you a good turn, I dare say, when it came in his way, but that sort of fellow never can keep anything up. He has been too much used to having his own way, and following his own fancies. Don't you lose heart because he won't put himself out for you."

"Well, Harry, you are the best fellow in the world. You would put a backbone into any one."

"Now, we'll just have a quite cheroot, and then turn in; and see if you don't have good news to-morrow. How hot it is! the Strand to-night is as hot as the Punjaub and the reek of it—phat! my throat is full of it still."

East took off his coat, and was just throwing it on a chair, when he stopped, and, feeling in his pocket, said—

"Let's see, here's a note for you. The porter gave it to me as I knocked in."

Tom took it carelessly, but the next moment was tearing it open with trembling fingers. "From my cousin," he said. East watched him read, and saw the blood rush to his face, and the light come into his eyes.

"Good news, Tom, I see. Bravo, old boy. You've had a long fight for it, and deserve to win."

Tom got up, tossed the note across the table, and began walking up and down the room; his heart was too full for speech.

"May I read?" said East, looking up.

Tom nodded, and he read—

"DEAR TOM,—I am coming to town to spend a week with them in Eaton Square. Call on me to-morrow at twelve, or, if you are engaged then, between three and five. I have no time to add more now, but long to see you.—Your loving cousin,

KATIE.

"P.S.—I will give you your parcel back to-morrow, and then you can *burn* the contents yourself, or do what you like with them. Uncle bids me say he shall be glad if you will come and dine to morrow, and any other day you can spare while I am here."

When he had read the note, East got up and shook hands heartily with Tom, and then sat down again quietly to

finish his cheroot, watching with a humorous look his friend's march.

"And you think it is really all right now?" Tom asked, in one form or another, after every few turns; and East replied in various forms of chaffing assurance that there could not be much further question on the point. At last, when he had finished his cheroot, he got up, and, taking his candle, said, "Good night, Tom; when that revolution comes, which you're always predicting, remember, if you're not shot or hung, you'll always find a roost for you and your wife in New Zealand."

"I don't feel so sure about the revolution now, Harry."

"Of coarse you don't. Mind, I bargain for the dinner in Eaton Square. I always told you I should dine there before I started."

* * * * * *

The next day Tom found that he was not engaged at twelve o'clock, and was able to appear in Eaton Square. He was shown up into the drawing-room, and found Katie alone there. The quiet and coolness of the darkened room was most grateful to him after the glare of the streets, as he sat down by her side.

"But Katie," he said, as soon as the first salutations and congratulations had passed, "how did it all happen? I can't believe my senses yet. I am afraid I may wake up any minute"

"Well, it was chiefly owing to two lucky coincidences; though no doubt it would have all come right in time without them."

"Our meeting the other day in the street, I suppose, was one of them?"

"Yes. Coming across you so suddenly, carrying the little girl, reminded Mary of the day when she sprained her ankle, and you carried her through Hazel Copse. Ah, you never told me *all* of that adventure, either of you."

"All that was necessary, Katie."

"Oh! I have pardoned you. Uncle saw then that she was very much moved at something, and guessed well enough what it was. He is so very kind, and so fond of Mary, he would do anything in the world that she wished. She was quite unwell that evening; so he and aunt had to go out alone; and they met Mr. St. Cloud at a party, who was said to be engaged to her."

"It wasn't true, then?"

"No, never. He is a very designing man, though I believe he was really in love with poor Mary. At any rate he has persecuted her for more than a year. And, it is very wicked, but I am afraid he spread all those reports himself."

"Of their engagement? Just like him!"

"Uncle is so good-natured, you know; and he took advantage of it, and was always coming here, and riding with them. And he made Uncle believe dreadful stories about you, which made him seem so unkind. He was quite afraid to have you at the house."

"Yes, I saw that last year; and the second coincidence?"

"It happened that very night. Poor uncle was very much troubled what to do; so, when he met Mr. St. Cloud, as I told you, he took him aside to ask him again about you. Somehow, a gentleman who was a friend of yours at Oxford overheard what was said, and came forward and explained everything."

"Yes, he came and told me."

"Then you know more than I about it."

"And you think Mr. Porter is convinced that I am not quite such a scamp after all?"

"Yes, indeed; and the boys are so delighted that they will see you again. They are at home for the holidays, and so grown."

"And Mary?"

"She is very well. You will see her before long, I dare say."

"Is she at home?"

"She is out riding with uncle. Now I will go up and get your parcel, which I had opened at home before I got aunt's note asking me here. No wonder we could never find her boot."

Katie disappeared, and at the same time Tom thought he heard the sound of horses' feet. Yes, and they have stopped, too; it must be Mary and her father. He could not see, because of the blinds and other devices for keeping the room cool. But the next moment there were voices in the hall below, and then a light step on the carpeted stair which no ear but his could have heard. His heart beat with heavy, painful pulsations, and his head swam as the door opened, and Mary in her riding-habit stood in the room.

CHAPTER L.

THE POSTSCRIPT.

Our curtain must rise once again, and it shall be on a familiar spot. Once more we must place ourselves on the Hawk's Lynch, and look out over the well-known view, and the happy autumn fields, ripe with the golden harvest. Two people are approaching on horseback from the Barton side, who have been made one since we left them at the fall of the curtain in the last chapter. They ride lovingly together, close to one another, and forgetful of the whole world, as they should do, for they have scarcely come to the end of their honeymoon.

They are in country costume—she in a light habit, but well cut, and sitting on her as well as she sits on her dainty grey; he in shooting-coat and wide-awake, with his fishing basket slung over his shoulder. They come steadily up the hill-side, rousing a yellow-hammer here and there from the furze-bushes, and only draw bit when they have reached the very top of the knoll. Then they dismount, and Tom produces two halters from his fishing basket, and taking off the bridles, fastens the horses up in the shade of the fir-trees, and loosen's their girths, while Mary, after searching in the basket, pulls out a bag, and pours out a prodigal feed of corn before each of them, on the short grass.

"What are you doing, you wasteful little woman? You should have put the bag underneath. They won't be able to pick up half the corn."

"Never mind, dear; then the birds will get it."

"And you have given them enough for three feeds."

"Why did you put so much in the bag? Besides you know it is the last feed I shall give her. Poor dear little Gypsy," she added, patting the neck of her dapple grey; "you have found a kind mistress for her, dear; haven't you?"

"Yes; I know she will be lightly worked and well cared for," he said shortly, turning away, and busying himself with the basket again.

"But no one will ever love you, Gipsy, like your old mistress. Now give me a kiss, and you shall have your treat," and she pulled a piece of sugar out of the pocket of her riding habit; at the sight of which the grey held out her

beautiful nose to be fondled, and then lapped up the sugar with eager lips from Mary's hand, and turned to her corn.

The young wife tripped across, and sat down near her husband, who was laying out their luncheon on the turf. "It was very kind of you to think of coming here for our last ride," she said. "I remember how charmed I was with the place the first Sunday I ever spent at Englebourn, when Katie brought me up here directly after breakfast, before we went to the school. Such a time ago it seems—before I ever saw you. And I have never been here since. But I love it most for your sake, dear. Now tell me again all the times you have been here."

Tom proceeded to recount some of his visits to the Hawk's Lynch, in which we have accompanied him. And they talked on about Katie, and East, and the Englebourn people, past and present, old Betty, and Harry and his wife in New Zealand, and David patching coats and tending bees, and executing the Queen's justice to the best of his ability in the village at their feet.

"Poor David, I must get over somehow to see him before we leave home. He feels your uncle's death, and the other changes in the parish, more than any one."

"I am so sorry the living was sold," said Mary; "Katie and her husband would have made Englebourn into a little paradise."

"It could not be helped, dear. I can't say I'm sorry. There would not have been work enough for him. He is better where he is, in a great town-parish."

"But Katie did love the place so, and was so used to it; she had become quite a little queen there before her marriage. See what we women have to give up for you," she said, playfully, turning to him. But a shadow passed over his face, and he looked away without answering.

"What makes you look sorrowful, dear? What are you thinking of?"

"Oh, nothing!"

"That isn't true. Now, tell me what it is. You have no right, you know, to keep anything from me."

"I can't bear to think that you have had to sell Gipsy. You have never been without a riding horse till now. You will miss your riding dreadfully, I am sure dear."

"I shall do very well without riding. I am so proud of learning my lesson from you. You will see what a poor man's wife I shall make. I have been getting mamma to

let me do the house-keeping, and know how a joint should look, and all sorts of useful things. And I have made my own house-linen. I shall soon get to hate all luxuries as much as you do."

"Now, Mary, you mustn't run into extremes. I never said you ought to hate all luxuries, but that almost everybody one knows is a slave to them."

"Well, and I hate anything that wants to make a slave of me."

"You are a dear little free woman. But now we are on this subject again, Mary, I really want to speak to you about keeping a lady's maid. We can quite afford it, and you ought to have one."

"I shall do nothing of the sort."

"Not to oblige me, Mary?"

"No, not even to oblige you. There is something to be said for dear Gypsy. But, take a maid again! to do nothing but torment me, and pretend to take care of my clothes, and my hair! I never knew what freedom was till I got rid of poor, foolish, grumbling Higgins."

"But you may get a nice girl who will be a comfort to you."

"No, I never will have a woman again to do anything but look after me. It isn't fair to them. Besides, dear, you can't say that I don't look better since I have done my own hair. Did you ever see it look brighter than it does now?"

"Never; and now here is luncheon all ready. So they sat down on the verge of the slope, and eat their cold chicken and tongue, with the relish imparted by youth, a long ride, and the bracing air.

Mary was merrier and brighter than ever, but it was an effort with him to respond; and soon she began to notice this, and then there was a pause, which she broke at last with something of an effort.

"There is that look again. What makes you look so serious, now? I must know."

"Was I looking serious? I beg your pardon, dearest, and I won't do so again any more;" and he smiled as he answered, but the smile faded away before her steady, loving gaze, and he turned slightly from her, and looked out over the vale below.

She watched him for a short time in silence, her own fair young face changing like a summer sea as the light clouds pass over it. Presently she seemed to have come to some

decision; for, taking off her riding hat, she threw it and her whip and gauntlets, on the turf beside her, and drawing nearer to his side, laid her hand on his. He looked at her fondly, and, stroking her hair, said—

"Take care of your complexion, Mary."

"Oh, it will take care of itself in this air, dear. Besides, you are between me and the sun; and now you *must* tell me why you look so serious. It is not the first time I have noticed that look. I am your wife you know, and I have a right to know your thoughts, and share all your joy, and all your sorrow. I do not mean to give up any of my rights which I got by marrying you."

"Your rights, dearest! your poor little rights, which you have gained by changing name, and plighting troth. It is thinking of that—thinking of what you have bought, and the price you have paid for it, which makes me sad at times: even when you are sitting by me, and laying your hand on my hand, and the sweet burden of your pure life and being on my soiled and baffled manhood."

"But it was my own bargain, you know, dear, and I am satisfied with my purchase. I paid the price with my eyes open."

"Ah, if I only could feel that!"

"But you know that it is true."

"No, dearest, that is the pinch. I do not know that it is true. I often feel that it is just a bit not true. It was a one-sided bargain, in which one of the parties had eyes open and got all the advantage; and that party was I."

"I will not have you so conceited," she said patting his hand once or twice, and looking more bravely than ever up into his eyes. "Why should you think you were so much the cleverer of the two as to get all the good out of our bargain? I am not going to allow that you were so much the more quick-witted and clear-sighted. Women are said to be as quick-witted as men. Perhaps it is not I who have been outwitted after all."

"Look at the cost, Mary. Think of what you will have to give up. You cannot reckon it up yet."

"What! are you going back to the riding-horses and lady's maid again. I thought I had convinced you on those points."

"They are only a very small part of the price. You have left a home where everybody loved you. You knew

it; you were sure of it. You had felt their love ever since you could remember anything."

"Yes, dear, and I feel it still. They will be all just as fond of me at home, though I am your wife."

"At home! It is no longer your home."

"No, I have a home of my own now. A new home with new love there to live on; and an old home, with the old love to think of."

A new home instead of an old one; a poor home instead of a rich one—a home where the cry of the sorrow and suffering of the world will reach you, for one in which you had—"

"In which I had not you, dear. There now, that was my purchase. I set my mind on having you—buying you, as that is your word. I have paid my price, and got my bargain, and—you know, I was always an oddity, and rather wilful, am content with it."

"Yes, Mary, you have bought me, and you little know, dearest, what you have bought. I can scarcely bear my own selfishness at times when I think of what your life might have been had I left you alone, and what it must be with me."

"And what might have been, dear?"

"Why you might have married some man with plenty of money, who could have given you everything to which you have been used."

"I shall begin to think that you believe in luxuries, after all, if you go on making so much of them. You must not go on preaching one thing and practising another. I am a convert to your preaching, and believe in the misery of multiplying artificial wants. Your wife must have none."

"Yes, but wealth and position are not to be despised. I feel that, now that it is all done past recall, and I have to think of you. But the loss of them is a mere nothing to what you will have to go through.'

"What do you mean, dear? Of course we must expect some troubles, like other people."

"Why, I mean, Mary, that you might, at least, have married a contented man; some one who found the world a very good world, and was satisfied with things as they are, and had light enough to steer himself by, and not a fellow like me, full of all manner of doubts and perplexities, who sees little but wrong in the world about him, and more in himself."

"You think I should have been more comfortable?"

"Yes, more comfortable and happier. What right had I to bring my worries on you? For I know you can't live with me, dearest, and not be bothered and annoyed when I am anxious and dissatisfied."

"But what if I did not marry you to be comfortable?"

"My darling, you never thought about it, and I was too selfish to think for you."

"There now, you see, it is just as I said."

"How do you mean?"

"I mean that you are quite wrong in thinking that I have been deceived. I did not marry you, dear, to be comfortable—and I did think it all over; ay, over and over again. So you are not to run away with the belief that you have taken me in."

"I shall be glad enough to give it up, dearest, if you can convince me."

"Then you will listen while I explain?"

"Yes, with all my ears and all my heart."

"You remember the year that we met, when we danced and went nutting together, a thoughtless boy and girl—"

"Remember it! Have I ever—"

"You are not to interrupt. Of course you remember it all, and are ready to tell me that you loved me the first moment you saw me at the window in High street. Well, perhaps I shall not object to be told it at a proper time, but now I am making my confessions. I liked you then, because you were Katie's cousin, and almost my first partner, and were never tired of dancing, and were generally merry and pleasant, though you sometimes took to lecturing, even in those days."

"But, Mary—"

"You are to be silent now and listen. I liked you then. But you are not to look conceited and flatter yourself. It was only a girl's fancy. I couldn't have married you then—given myself up to you. No, I don't think I could, even on the night when you fished for me out of the window with the heather and heliotrope, though I kept them and have them still. And then came that scene down below, at old Simon's cottage, and I thought I should never wish to see you again. And then I came out in London, and went abroad. I scarcely heard of you again for a year, for Katie hardly ever mentioned you in her letters; and, though I sometimes wished that she would, and thought I should

just like to know what you were doing, I was too proud to ask. Meantime I went out and enjoyed myself, and had a great many pretty things said to me—much prettier things than you ever said—and made the acquaintance of pleasant young men, friends of papa and mamma; many of them with good establishments too. But I shall not tell you anything more about them, or you will be going off about the luxuries I have been used to. Then I began to hear of you again. Katie came to stay with us, and I met some of your Oxford friends. Poor dear Katie! she was full of you and your wild sayings and doings, half-frightened and half-pleased, but all the time the best and truest friend you ever had. Some of the rest were not friends at all; and I have heard many a sneer and unkind word, and stories of your monstrous speeches and habits. Some said you were mad; others that you liked to be eccentric; that you couldn't bear to live with your equals; that you sought the society of your inferiors to be flattered. I listened, and thought it all over, and, being wilful and eccentric myself, you know, liked more and more to hear about you, and hoped I should see you again some day. I was curious to judge for myself whether you were much changed for the better or the worse. And at last came the day when I saw you again, carrying the poor lame child; and, after that, you know what happened. So here we are, dear, and you are my husband. And you will please never to look serious again, from any foolish thought that I have been taken in; that I did not know what I was about when I took you 'for better for for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, till death us do part.' Now, what have you to say for yourself?"

"Nothing; but a great deal for you. I see more and more, my darling, what a brave, generous, pitying angel I have tied to myself. But seeing that makes me despise myself more."

"What! you are going to dare to disobey me already?"

"I can't help it dearest. All you say shows me more and more that you have made all the sacrifice, and I am to get all the benefit. A man like me has no right to bring such a woman as you under his burden."

"But you couldn't help yourself. It was because you were out of sorts with the world, smarting with the wrongs you saw on every side, struggling after something better and higher, and siding and sympathising with the poor and

weak, that I loved you. We should never have been here, dear, if you had been a young gentleman satisfied with himself and the world, and likely to get on well in society."

"Ah, Mary, it is all very well for a man. It is a man's business. But why is a woman's life to be made wretched? Why should you be dragged into all my perplexities, and doubts, and dreams, and struggles?"

"And why should I not?"

"Life should be all bright and beautiful to a woman. It is every man's duty to shield her from all that can vex, or pain, or soil."

"But have women different souls than men?"

"God forbid!"

"Then are we not fit to share your highest hopes?"

"To share our highest hopes! Yes, when we have any. But the mire and clay where one sticks fast over and over again, with no high hopes or high anything else in sight—a man must be a selfish brute to bring one he pretends to love into all that."

"Now, Tom," she said almost solemnly, "you are not true to yourself. Would you part with your own deepest convictions? Would you, if you could, go back to the time when you cared for and thought about none of these things?"

He thought a minute, and then, pressing her hand, said—

"No, dearest, I would not. The consciousness of the darkness in one and around one brings the longing for light. And then the light dawns; through mist and fog, perhaps, but enough to pick one's way by." He stopped a moment, and then added, "and shines ever brighter unto the perfect day. Yes, I begin to know it."

"Then, why not put me on your own level? Why not let me pick my way by your side? Cannot a woman feel the wrongs that are going on in the world? Cannot she long to see them set right, and pray that they may be set right? We are not meant to sit in fine silks and look pretty and spend money, any more than you are meant to make it, and cry peace where there is no peace. If a woman can not do much herself, she can honor and love a man who can."

He turned to her, and bent over her, and kissed her forehead, and kissed her lips. She looked up with sparkling eyes and said—

"Am I not right, dear?"

"Yes, you are right, and I have been false to my creed. You have taken a load off my heart, dearest. Henceforth their shall be but one mind and one soul between us. You have made me feel what it is that a man wants, what is the help that is meet for him."

He looked into her eyes, and kissed her again; and then rose up, for there was something within him like a moving of new life, which lifted him, and set him on his feet. And he stood with kindling brow, gazing into the autumn air, as his heart went sorrowing, but hopefully "sorrowing, back through all the faultful past." And she sat on at first, and watched his face; and neither spoke nor moved for some minutes. Then she rose too, and stood by his side :—

> And on her lover's arm she leant,
> And round her waist she felt it fold;
> And so across the hills they went,
> In that new world which is the old.

Yes, that new world, through the golden gates of which they had passed together, which is the old, old world after all, and nothing else. The same old and new world it was to our fathers and mothers as it is to us, and shall be to our children—a world clear and bright and ever becoming clearer and brighter to the humble, and true, and pure of heart, to every man and woman who will live in it as the children of the Maker and Lord of it, their Father. To them, and to them alone is that world, old and new, given, and all that is in it, fully and freely to enjoy. All others but these are occupying where they have no title; 'they are sowing much, but bringing in little; they eat, but have not enough; they drink, but are not filled with drink; they clothe themselves, but there is none warm; and he of them who earneth wages earneth wages to put them in a bag with holes." But these have the world and all things for a rightful and rich inheritance; for they hold them as dear children of Him in whose hand it and they are lying, and no power in earth and hell shall pluck them out of their Father's hand.

THE END.

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